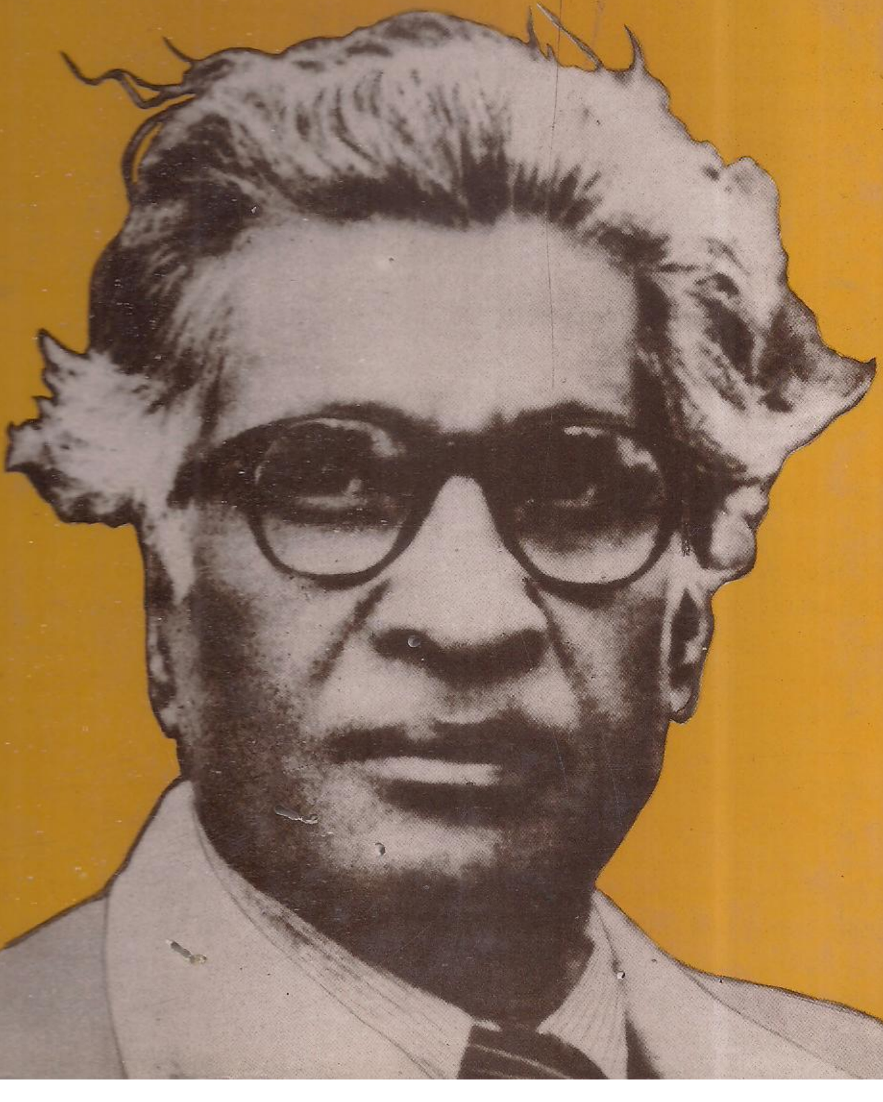
SELECTED WORKS OF
M. N. ROY

VOLUME III • 1927–1932

Edited by Sibnarayan Ray



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'M. N. Roy was undoubtedly the most colourful of all non-Russian communists in the era of Lenin and Stalin. . . . Roy ranks with Lenin and Mao Tse-tung in the development of fundamental Communist Policy for the underdeveloped, as contrasted with the industrialized, areas of the globe.' Such is the view expressed by two internationally acknowledged specialists on the Soviet Union, the Comintern and China, Professor Robert C. North and Mrs Xenia J. Eudin, in their jointly edited work *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*.

Manabendranath Roy had few peers in the diversity and richness of his revolutionary experience. He took a leading part in revolutionary movements in India, Mexico, the Soviet Union and China. A contemporary and colleague of stalwarts like Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Radek, Zinoviev, Togliatti, Chen Tu-hsiu, Mao, Ho Chi Minh and Tan Malaka, he was the founder of the Communist Party of Mexico (1919) and of India (1920). During the twenties he had risen to the highest echelon of the Comintern hierarchy (member of the Executive Committee, the Presidium and the Political Secretariat), and was besides an outstanding Marxist theorist and a penetrating and prolific writer.

Roy disagreed with the extreme left sectarian policy of the Comintern at the Sixth Congress (1928) and published his criticism in the Communist Opposition press in Germany. After his break with the Comintern he wrote his monumental work, *Revolution and Counterrevolution in China*, returned secretly to India (1930), was arrested and sentenced to twelve years' rigorous imprisonment, which was reduced on appeal to six years.

Volumes I and II of *Selected Works* covered Roy's writings between 1917 and 1927. Volume III presents a selection of his principal writings between 1927 and 1932. Very large sections of this volume were previously inaccessible since they had not been written in English nor published or included in any book. Roy's contributions to *Das Volksrecht*, *Gegen den Strom*, *Arbeiter Politik* and *INKOPP*, and his polemical pamphlet *Die International Verbundeten* were found in archives in Europe, and they have been translated for the first time from German into English for the present volume. Other rare material includes the 'Assembly Letter', Roy's 'Draft Resolution on

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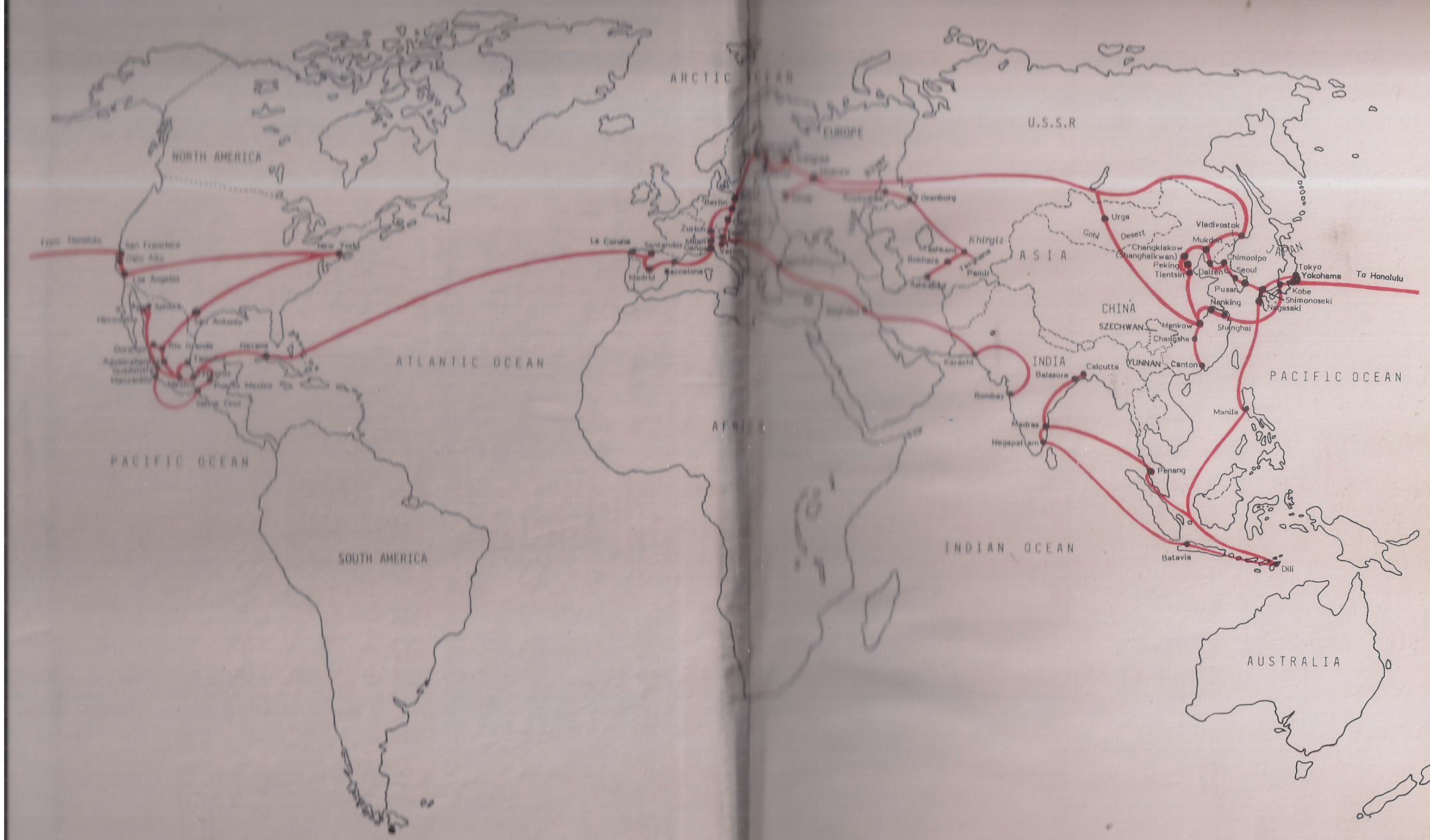
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M. N. Roy's odyssey in quest of freedom
Movements 1915–1930
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SELECTED WORKS OF

M. N. ROY

Volume III

1927–1932

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Edited by
SIBNARAYAN RAY

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Volume III (1927–1932)

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There can be no national prosperity so long as the great majority of the people remain in the state of economic bankruptcy. The entire social structure of the country must undergo a revolution. Antiquated means and mode of production should be discarded in favour of modern ones ... A specific mode of production cannot be discarded without disrupting the form of property with which it is related. The peasants will be able to improve their means and mode of cultivating land only when the larger part of the surplus product remains in their possession. . . .

I am prosecuted as a representative of the oppressed and exploited people of India for the crime of having advocated their right to national freedom, to economic prosperity and cultural progress.

While erecting a broad platform on which not only workers and peasants but all the other oppressed and exploited classes, namely artisans, small traders, employees, and toiling landowners and poor intellectuals can stand together in the fight for common interests, I have exposed and criticized the reactionary factors and the reformist tendencies in the nationalist movement . . .

I may be convicted by this imperialist court but the seeds I have sown will bear fruit, and I will be vindicated by the Indian people.

M. N. Roy, *My Defence*, Pondicherry, 1932, pp. 100, 112, 114.

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Calcutta
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Sibnarayan Ray

Introduction

By the time the Seventh Enlarged Plenum (22 November to 16 December 1926) of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) resolved to send M. N. Roy as chief of the ECCI delegation to the Chinese government at Wuhan, he had already reached the zenith of his political career as a communist. He had been elected a member of the ECCI, the Presidium, the Secretariat and the Orgbureau, and when the last two high-power bodies of the Comintern were amalgamated to form the Political Secretariat, he became also a member of that body together with Bukharin, Kuusinen, Piatnitsky, Manuilsky and Togliatti (Ercoli). Earlier at the Sixth Plenum (17 February to 15 March 1926) he had been made Chairman of the Eastern Commission. At the Seventh he was also elected member of the British and the Agrarian Commissions and member-secretary, with Petrov, of the Chinese Commission. He had offices and staff at Moscow, Berlin, Paris, Zurich and Amsterdam; published his own journal, *The Masses of India*; contributed frequently to *Inprecor* and other Comintern organs; and in February 1926 he had been appointed one of the editors of *The Communist International*. By the end of 1926 he thus quite clearly belonged to the highest echelon of the Comintern hierarchy.[1]

Roy's active political life had started in 1905 when at the age of eighteen he had joined the revolutionary nationalist underground in Bengal. Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War he and his revolutionary associates tried to organize an armed insurrection in eastern India against British rule. Undaunted by the failure of that attempt he went abroad in search of adequate armed assistance from the Germans. The perilous journey took him from the Dutch East Indies to the Philippines, Japan, Korea and China, ending up after ten months on the West coast of the United States (June 1916). At Stanford he adopted the name by which he would be known thereafter to the general public, Manabendra Nath Roy. (His original name was Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, but as an underground revolutionary he used a string of aliases.) There he also met Evelyn Trent, a graduate student with strong radical views and inclinations. They married, and together they escaped to Mexico shortly after the American government joined the war in support of the British. The Roys spent two and a half years in Mexico where Roy won the friendship of President Carranza, learnt Spanish and published several books in that language, studied Marx and became a Marxist, joined the Socialist movement, and towards the end of 1919 founded the Communist Party of Mexico.

In 1920 he went to Moscow at Lenin's invitation, and at the Second Congress of the Comintern (19 July to 7 Aug. 1920) his Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Question were adopted together with Lenin's Theses. In October that year he founded at Tashkent the *émigré* Communist Party of India. His activities during the next six years were so impressive that although a non-European he readily established himself as one of the foremost personalities of the Comintern hierarchy. His book *India in Transition* (1922) became a standard Marxist text and was published in several European languages; his other books also appeared in English, French, German and Russian editions; his journal *The Vanguard (The Advance-Guard, The Masses of India)*, published from various places in Europe and sent clandestinely to contacts in India, became the principal source of inspiration and guidance to the emerging radical forces in Indian politics. Through his writings, correspondence and emissaries he succeeded in converting some individuals in India to communism and establishing small communist centres in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the United Provinces and the Punjab. His articles and manifestos were frequently reproduced in Indian newspapers and periodicals, quite often in vernacular versions in Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Bengali. As the records of the Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India reveal, although nearly all Roy's publications were banned by the government they managed to reach people not only in the centres mentioned but also in Peshawar, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Hyderabad, Pondicherry, Orissa and other places. By the end of 1925 these efforts bore fruit in the founding of the Communist Party of India at Kanpur.

Roy spent the first seven months of 1927 in China as head of the Comintern delegation. Some important details and documents relating to this mission are included in the second volume of the *Selected Works*. In recent years interest has grown, both in mainland China and in Taiwan, in Roy's role in the Chinese revolution, and a preliminary report has been prepared and published by Huang I-shu on 'Chinese Source Materials on M. N. Roy'.[2] These materials await English translation, but from what have lately become available it is clear that Roy's brief stay and active participation in the Chinese revolution made an impact on China much deeper and more far-reaching than has been recognized by earlier scholars, or by his admirers and critics.[3]

On his return to Moscow Roy submitted his China report together with relevant documents to the Comintern.[4] He then turned to other pressing issues which had sharpened during his absence. The struggle for power inside the Soviet Union was fast nearing its climax. Zinoviev, who had been removed from his office as Comintern President in November 1926, had joined forces with Trotsky in the latter's fight against Stalin, who now had Bukharin on his side. Roy supported Stalin and Bukharin against Zinoviev–Trotsky, and wrote a pamphlet attacking the allies of the latter in the major Communist parties of Europe. It was published in both French and German, and it is with an English translation of this pamphlet from its German version that the present volume begins.

The next issue to demand Roy's attention was developments in India. In the latter part of 1927 radicalization of Indian politics was beginning to gain momentum. Since the Second Congress of the Comintern Roy had consistently maintained that the native bourgeoisie in India possessed no revolutionary potential, that it exploited popular discontent to strengthen its bargaining position with the British, that in fact the colonial and the metropolitan vested interests were seeking to evolve a stable partnership for a more intensive exploitation of India, that the struggle for India's complete independence, to be successful, required an active alliance of workers, peasants and radical sections of the petty bourgeoisie fully committed to a programme of agrarian–democratic revolution. He now wrote a detailed letter to the leadership of the Communist movement in India explaining how the newly-formed Communist Party would function publicly and effectively while maintaining its strictly disciplined underground organization and how it should build up a Workers' and Peasants' Party which would not merely provide it with a legal cover 'but develop into the rallying ground of the exploited social elements (proletariat, peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie)', and he spelled out the *minimum* programme which would constitute the basis of a mass movement in India, combining the struggle for political independence with that of a socio-economic revolution.

This letter was intercepted by the Intelligence department of the Government of India and it came to be known subsequently as the 'Assembly Letter'. It is the second item in this volume. At the same time preparations were afoot for the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, and on behalf of the Indian Commission Roy drew up and submitted in October his Draft Resolution on the Indian Question. The Draft was to be considered by the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI (9 to 25 Feb. 1928) which Roy attended as a member of its Presidium. However, his refusal to join the Stalinist gang against Bukharin (whose position was now being systematically undermined) or to support the new ultra-left line (which was being formulated for adoption by the Sixth Congress) cost him dearly.[5] The revised final Draft

Resolution which he sent to Bukharin on 24 March from his sickbed (he had fallen seriously ill before the Plenum was over), was suppressed by the *apparatchiki*. He was not provided with proper medical treatment; his passport was held back by Piatnitsky, head of the Comintern *apparatchiki*; there was an apprehension of his being 'Cominterned' indefinitely in Moscow. However, with some help from Bukharin and a few other friends, he was airlifted somewhat clandestinely from Moscow to Berlin early in April.[6] The next few months were spent in convalescence. His departure was subsequently sanctioned in May by 'the Small Committee of the ECCI Secretariat' but, having read how his views had been unscrupulously distorted and violently attacked in his absence at the Sixth Congress (17 July to 1 September 1928), he decided to stay on in Germany rather than return to the Soviet Union. Actually, after Mexico, the city where he felt most at home was Berlin not Moscow; he had formed a much larger number of lasting personal friendships in Germany and Holland than in the Soviet Union.

His monthly periodical *The Masses* had to close due both to his illness and lack of funds. He did not attend the Sixth Congress and was not re-elected to the ECCI, its Presidium or any of its other organs. He was still a member but no longer a functionary of the Comintern. However, as soon as he recovered sufficiently he began contributing again to *International Press Correspondence* where his articles continued to be published till March 1929. Towards the end of 1928 or early in 1929 he sent from Berlin to the ECCI a lengthy explanation and defence of his so-called 'Decolonization' thesis, refuting the distortions made by his opponents and exposing the inner contradictions of the position adopted by the Sixth Congress. This letter was also suppressed by the *apparatchiki*. In the present volume I have included his Draft Resolution of March 1928, the full text of his post-Congress submission 'On the Indian Question', and a selection of articles from *The Masses*, 1928, and *Inprecor*, 1928–9.

Although Roy strongly disagreed with the theoretical and strategic formulations of the Sixth Congress, this did not immediately cause an open breach between him and the Comintern. The calumny which was subsequently invented and spread by his enemies, especially the Communists in India, namely, that Roy was expelled from the Comintern on the grounds of misconduct in China, has no factual support whatsoever in the Comintern's available proceedings. In fact, his China Report was officially published in Moscow and Leningrad several months after the Sixth Congress. If, like R. P. Dutt and several other stalwarts, Roy had agreed to recant and to support the new line of the Sixth Congress or had he at least resigned himself to 'the wisdom of silence', it is quite probable that his eclipse might have proved temporary and he might even have regained his position after a while, even if only temporarily.[7] But being the sort of person he was, he refused to recant or be muted, or join the campaign against Bukharin. When the organs of the Comintern were no longer open to him, he decided to express his critical views in the Communist Opposition press. It was his integrity and this act of defiant independence which clinched the issue. At the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI (3 to 19 July 1929) his contribution to the Brandler press was specifically mentioned as evidence of Roy having 'placed himself outside the ranks of the Comintern', but it was not till December 1929 that his formal expulsion was published in *Inprecor*.

The factors and issues which brought about Roy's break with the Comintern were many and were so intertwined that they may be considered in some depth and detail only in a full-length biographical study. Some of them, however, may be briefly mentioned here. Firstly, there was the grim struggle for power in the Bolshevik Party. Zinoviev, founder-President of the Comintern, was removed from office in December 1926; Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Kamenev, Rakovsky and seventy other leading figures were expelled from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union at its Fifteenth Congress in December 1927; and now in 1928–9 Stalin, after thoroughly undermining the authority and influence of his only remaining serious political rival, Bukharin, at last succeeded in removing the latter from all his important positions and, finally, in November 1929 Bukharin too was expelled from the ECCI and the CPSU Politbureau. Roy had supported Stalin against Trotsky, but he rejected the overture from Stalin's henchmen to join the band against Bukharin. This was one of several reasons for Stalin's wrath.

Secondly, there was from the beginning a good deal of resistance inside the Comintern against Russia's absolute dominance over that organization. The Comintern's financial dependence on Moscow was total; its rules and regulations were framed and amended to tighten Moscow's hold. During the 'twenties Moscow intervened, on several occasions, in the affairs of the Communist parties of different countries, laying down guidelines to be followed by them and sometimes replacing their leaders when they proved recalcitrant by persons of its own choice. Nevertheless, in several countries of Western Europe (for example, Germany, France, Holland, Sweden), where acknowledged leaders of the Communist parties had a strong power-base or following in their own organization, Moscow did not find it altogether easy to impose its will. Although created and maintained by the Soviet Union, the Comintern in its early years had perforce a degree of latitude required by its proclaimed internationalism and aided by divisions among the Russian leaders. An individual like

Roy, who did not have a power-base but who possessed outstanding intellectual abilities and revolutionary steadfastness, could win recognition and support during this phase, despite his outspokenly independent style of thinking. On many occasions appreciation of his views was publicly expressed by several of the top figures in the movement, such as Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Bukharin, Radek, Zinoviev and others. The situation changed drastically after Stalin had eliminated all his major rivals in the Russian Party, and started what came to be known as the 'Stalinization process'. Inside the Soviet Union as well as in the Communist parties outside the Soviet Union and of course in the Comintern apparatus, Stalin systematically ejected from all positions of power persons he suspected to be of the slightest independence and replaced them by his chosen agents who could be trusted to carry out his orders unquestioningly. Roy was personally quite close to Stalin, but he refused to surrender his 'claim to the right of independent thinking'. Lenin had respected his right at the Second Congress; and Roy had exercised it throughout his Comintern years. But in the Stalinist scheme of total concentration of power in a single person this right had no place at all.

Thirdly, in the Comintern, while the theorists or intellectuals were very much in the public view, they were greatly distrusted by the *apparatchiki*. In his bid for absolute power Stalin needed and used the *apparatchiki* which grew increasingly in importance and size. No intellectual himself, Stalin did not have any scruples in sacrificing an intellectual who was by nature too independent, and who, even after he had been elected to the ECCI and the Political Secretariat, refused to give up his intellectual independence. The Piatnitskys, Lozovskys, Manuilskys, Kuusinens, Molotovs, Schubins and their ilk had never liked this proud and highly articulate Asian, and they actively contributed to his downfall.

Besides the organization-men in Moscow, there were also others who were keen on Roy's ouster from the Comintern hierarchy. The leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain wanted to establish their 'protectorate over the Indian Communist movement'.[8] This precipitated a crisis in 1925 which was temporarily resolved by establishing a Foreign Bureau of the CPI headed by Roy with Clemens Dutt of CPGB as one of its other two members. However, when Roy was away in China in 1927 some CPGB men, such as Saklatvala and Campbell, tried to turn the communists in India against Roy. The mysterious appearance of an Indian delegation at the Sixth Congress which concertedly attacked Roy in his absence, and which was given a lot of prominence in the sessions and in *Inprecor*, could hardly have taken place without encouragement and support of the *apparatchiki*. The 'internal intrigue' subsequently mentioned by Roy involved the *apparatchiki*, some leaders of the CPGB, the group of Indians in Berlin led by Roy's old rival Virendranath Chattopadhyay, and some communists who had come from India in the hope of supplanting Roy.

These power-struggles and intrigues took place in a larger and more widely-known context of debates and differences over theoretical and programmatic formulations. At the end of the First World War the objective situation was generally believed to be ripe for revolutions in Europe. The Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia was followed by the founding of the Communist International in 1919 with the proclaimed objective of the proletariat in every country coming together in 'the epoch of the disintegration and collapse of the entire capitalist World System' and seizing 'State power immediately'.[9] However, the terrible experience of war-communism in the Soviet Union and the collapse of communist uprisings in several countries made moderation and compromise unavoidable. In Russia Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy (1921) against much opposition from his Bolshevik colleagues; the Comintern, at its Third Congress (1921), renounced 'the theory of the offensive', recognized that 'the post-war revolutionary ferment is over', admitted that 'capitalism had managed to restore a temporary equilibrium', acknowledged 'the necessity of retreat and of a longer period of preparation', and adopted the policy of the 'United Front'.[10] According to Comintern theorists and historians this marked the beginning of the Second Phase or Period.

During 1927, debates became sharp on whether the Second Period was over and the Third had begun. Both Stalin and Bukharin spoke of the Third period. 'To Bukharin the third period meant that capitalism was in a process of enormous expansion, which was a clear advance on the pre-war standard.'[11] He was, therefore, in favour of continuing the strategy of moderation. Stalin, however, presented the Third Period as that of intensification of the crisis of capitalism resulting in wars and 'gigantic class struggles', and ushering in 'a new revolutionary era'. Stalin wanted to 'out-Trotsky' Trotsky by adopting an ultra-left policy and at the same time to undermine Bukharin and his supporters who advocated a more moderate or centrist line. As Stalin established his absolute control over the Russian State-Party and the Comintern between 1927 and 1929, his line became the official policy, formulated at the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI, proclaimed at the Sixth Congress, and fully explicated and made effective at the Tenth Plenum.

The new line identified social democracy with what it called 'Social Fascism'. Not only was the policy of United Front abandoned, but socialists and social democrats were now considered to be greater enemies than Fascists and Nazis. In Germany, the Stalinist leadership of the Communist Party, in fact, backed the Nazis in fighting the Socialists and in destroying the democratic republic. In the trade union organizations, communists were to form factions, seek to destroy the influence of the socialists and reformists, bring about splits, and form organizations totally controlled by themselves. The consequences were disastrous. Not only did the new line help the Nazis to establish their dictatorship in Germany; it isolated the communists everywhere, precipitated a series of splits in many communist parties in Europe and the USA; and transformed the Comintern into a fully subservient instrument of the Soviet Union.[12]

In so far as colonies like India were concerned, the new line instructed communists to 'unmask the national-reformism of the Indian National Congress', 'advance the irreconcilable programme of armed struggle', 'create a cadre of party functionaries from the ranks of the working class itself', 'establish separate revolutionary trade unions', abandon the Workers' and Peasants' parties (which had been formed earlier), and fight for 'the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in the form of a Soviet republic'.[13]

This extreme turn in the Comintern's policy was synchronized with the launching of the first Five Year Plan, the principal aim of which was 'the most rapid possible growth of industry'. The Central Committee of the CPSU in its resolution of 23 April 1929 declared that 'the necessity of catching up and surpassing the advanced capitalist countries technically and economically obliges the Party to pursue a policy of a rapid rate of expansion of industry . . . the proletariat has now embarked on the very difficult work of . . . the socialist transformation of agriculture, which is our central objective in the countryside for the forthcoming period'.[14] The plan stressed 'a faster rate of growth for heavy industry', and expansion of collectivized agriculture (both Kolkhozy and Sovkhozy). The arguments of Bukharin and his supporters against the extraordinary measures of agricultural collectivization and forced grain collection, and for a policy of equilibrium 'in which industry develops on the foundation of a rapidly growing agricultural economy', were rejected as 'blind, bewildered, anti-party'.[15]

Virtually on every one of these issues Roy differed from the official Stalinist line, but during 1928 he kept his criticism confined to the Indian question. His drafts and rejoinders were not published or circulated. Although Roy had been personally very close to Brandler and Thalheimer he did not join them when they formed the Communist Opposition in Germany in December 1928. He chose to remain within the limits of party legality. As late as March 1929 his articles were allowed to appear in *Inprecor*. In April the Central Committee of the

CPSU decided to remove Bukharin from the posts occupied by him in *Pravda* and the Comintern.[16] Deprived of access to Comintern periodicals, Roy decided at last to publish his views in the Opposition press. Even then he took the precaution of writing under the alias 'Richard' which he had been using in Germany since his departure from Moscow. On 17 May 1929 his first article on the crisis in the Comintern appeared in the Opposition journal *Das Volksrecht*. This was followed by two more in the same journal, both critical of the new line. Richard's identity was, of course, no secret to the Comintern *apparatchiki*. Contribution to the Brandler press was used as the formal reason for demanding Roy's expulsion from the Comintern at the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI. Although no resolution to this effect was published immediately in the Comintern journals, the news appeared in the leading Opposition periodical *Gegen den Strom* in its issue of 7 September 1929. In its issue of 14 September *Gegen den Strom* published Roy's 'Open Letter to the Communist International'. Roy's series of articles on 'The Crisis in the Comintern' began to appear in *Gegen den Strom* from its issue of 28 September 1929. The resolution which 'excluded' Roy from the Communist International was actually passed on 23 November 1929 and published in *Inprecor* on 13 December.[17]

Between May 1929 and his arrest in Bombay in July 1931, Roy was a frequent contributor to the Opposition press. From available records no doubt is left that as a theorist he occupied as important a position in the Opposition as he had done previously in the Comintern. Not only did he contribute to the major Opposition periodicals in Germany, like *Volksrecht, Gegen den Strom* and *Arbeiter Politik*, but also was editor, jointly with August Thalheimer, of *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition* (*INKOPP*), the organ of the international Opposition. Besides the German edition, *INKOPP* also had an English-language edition published from New York.

These German writings of Roy in the Opposition periodicals during 1929–31 have so far been a closed book to Roy scholars and students of World Communism. They constitute a major part of the contents of the present volume of *Selected Works*. In this respect, this volume is quite different from the two earlier volumes. A large body of primary source material is made accessible *for the first time* to serious students of modern history. The original German texts are not available anywhere in this country (except currently, in photocopy, in my personal collection); and to the best of my knowledge, no English translation of this source material has so far been published anywhere in the world (except now, in this volume of the *Selected Works*).

But during 1929–30 Roy's superabundant energies were not entirely occupied with the Opposition or with periodical writings. Hunted by the British Intelligence Service, maligned and under attack by the Comintern *apparatchiki* and by party-line Communists in Germany, England and India, moving from place to place to avoid the danger of arrest and extradition, considerably handicapped by illness and by lack of regular income, Roy nevertheless possessed plentiful inner strength to be able to devote himself during this highly strenuous period to two very major intellectual undertakings, besides attending to his political work and polemical writings.[18] His China Report, submitted in late 1927, had been published in early 1929. But it consisted mainly of resolutions, declarations, theses, manifestos, speeches, articles and similar documents. He now wanted to write a socio-historical study of China which would illumine the course of contemporary events in which he had himself taken an active part. By July 1930 the manuscript was ready. It was written from the point of view of historical materialism; among other issues, it explored the nature of the so-called 'Asiatic Mode of Production' and Feudalism, in the specific context of Chinese society, economy and history. More than half of the work was devoted to a critical survey of developments in China from pre-Confucian times to the founding of the Kuomintang. The past had to be carefully examined to understand the problems of the present and to build the future. The work was written in English; it was almost immediately translated into German by his friend Paul Froelich, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany, who had also been expelled from the Party in 1929. It was published towards the end of 1930 by Soziologische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin, under the title *Revolution und Konterrevolution in China* (480 pages). It was acclaimed on publication as an outstanding work, and reviewed extensively in *Gegen den Strom* in its issues of 17 and 31 January 1931. By that time Roy was already back in India in the thick of underground revolutionary activities. It would take another sixteen years before the English version of this monumental work could be made available in print with two new chapters and an epilogue added to the original.

The other major project, provisionally entitled 'Decline and Fall of the British Empire', was to be a fuller treatment of the themes outlined in *India in Transition, The Future of Indian Politics*, and his paper 'On the Indian Question in the Sixth World Congress of the C.I.'. In collaboration with the British Communist Hugh Rathbone who had continued to be a loyal friend even after Roy's break with the Comintern, he collected a mass of valuable material, but the work remained incomplete when he left Europe for India. 'Packed in a big box the materials were left with my publishers in Berlin, who, being a communist firm, were raided on Hitler's advent to power, and the result of many years' work went into the bonfire.'[19]

After having completed his China book, Roy decided to return to India where a revolutionary situation seemed to be maturing again in which he wanted to participate. All his friends in Germany were opposed to the decision since the risk involved was very considerable. A warrant for his arrest had been issued at the time of the Kanpur Conspiracy Case; and since he was the principal accused, a heavy sentence of long-term imprisonment was certain to be imposed once he was caught by the police. However, since early youth hazards had never deflected Roy from any self-chosen decision, and he now began making preparations. He had made some new recruits in Berlin from among the Indian students, and in August 1930 he despatched several of them to India to prepare the ground for his arrival. He sent with them a 'Manifesto to the Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India'. The most able, active and loyal among these new recruits was Tayab Ali Shaikh who organized Royist groups in Bombay and Calcutta, and who became Roy's first biographer in English.[20] Roy's other emissaries were Sundar Kabadi, Brajesh Singh and Anadi Bhaduri.

Roy and his first wife Evelyn had separated in late 1925 or early 1926 when the latter returned to her homeland, the United States of America. Towards the end of 1926 Roy met Louise Geissler who accompanied him to China as his secretary–companion. Although they never married, in contemporary Chinese accounts she is mentioned as Mrs Roy.[21] Born in Munich on 26 January 1899, Louise Geissler was the daughter of a civil servant in the department of foreign affairs of Bavaria. Her father was German, but her mother was a fascinating person of gypsy origin. The family had six children. After school Louise was for some time an employee in the same department as her father. She was a member of Spartakusbund in 1919; in 1922 she formally joined the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). In the Party she worked as an office secretary–stenographer and in the late twenties she became a full-time employee of the Comintern. It was she who went to Moscow and brought Roy to Berlin for medical treatment in April 1928. Louise and Roy lived together till Roy's departure from Germany for India. She loved Roy deeply, but she also knew that connubial bliss or a settled domestic life was not on Roy's agenda.[22]

Roy did not have a valid German visa when he was brought from Moscow to Berlin, and consequently the threat of arrest and extradition was ever-present. Apart from a period of convalescence at St Moritz, he also made occasional short visits to Holland, where he had many friends, and to Switzerland. In Holland his closest friend was Hendricus Sneevliet (alias Maring) who had founded the Socialist movement in the Dutch East Indies, and who had introduced Roy to the young generation of Indonesian revolutionaries, Semaun, Tan Malaka, Alimin, Hatta and Shahrir. He too had broken with the Comintern, but because of his closeness to Trotsky he differed politically from Roy. However, this did not affect their strong personal friendship, and in 1930 when Sneevliet invited Roy to be his guest in Holland the latter was 'stuffed with good Dutch grub, the best in the world' by Mrs Sneevliet. Sneevliet was about four years older than Roy; during World War II he was killed by the Nazis. Roy greatly enjoyed touring Holland on a bicycle.[23] In Zurich Roy had in Christian Hitz-Bay (1883–1954) a very dependable friend who had provided the cover address for *The Vanguard* and for Roy's 'Letter to MacDonald' in 1924, and who was a member of the local and state parliament of Zurich. Son of an engineer, himself a lawyer, Hitz-Bay was editor of a succession of radical periodicals, *Bundner Volkswacht, Volksrecht* (Zurich), and *Kampfer*.[24] Roy enjoyed the company of this cultured and liberal-minded Marxist.

But most of the time Roy lived with Louise Geissler in a flat near Tiergarten. This shelter was provided by Willi Muenzenberg (1889–1940), founder of the Communist Youth-International and for many years a very close friend and colleague of Roy. Muenzenberg continued to remain in the Comintern as an important functionary, but he did not take part in the faction fight and he won his prominence by organizing pro-communist cultural fronts.[25] Roy's friends often gathered in his flat in the late evenings, where they had excited discussions, sometimes even dance parties, but Roy would 'lean back in a corner of the couch or on an easy chair, withdrawn and quiet, with his pipe, observing all and everything'. He liked 'playing chess or intently listening to music'.[26] He worked on his China manuscript in the roomy cellar of the publisher Malik Verlag, and in the afternoon sat with his friends in a favourite cafe in Kurfuerstendamm, the main thoroughfare of Berlin. It was in this cafe that he met, shortly after his flight from Moscow to Berlin, his future wife, Ellen Gotschalk.

I have already edited and published a comprehensive book on Ellen, and therefore shall not enter here into the details of her life.[27] She had left home at the age of nineteen, and joined the KPD when she was about twenty-three or twenty-four. At this time she was Secretary of the European section of the International Peasant Council in Berlin, a front organization of the Comintern. Ellen naturally knew Roy by reputation, and after that first meeting she often saw him, but almost always in the company of others. She sometimes brought him work from her office to be translated from Russian into German, of course without the knowledge of her 'Moscow boss' who had previously worked under Roy. It was paid work of a non-political nature, and went in a small way to providing Roy with some modest income. Quite often Roy, Louise, Ellen and another friend called 'Leo' met either at Roy's apartment or at Ellen's studio which they called the 'Top of the World', and Roy sometimes enjoyed cooking a Bengali meal for them. This quiet and friendly relationship between Roy and Ellen continued for two years, and then one Thursday evening at the end of August 1930 they both discovered and acknowledged to each other that they were in love.[28] According to Ellen's account both she and Roy were going through a deep personal crisis at the time. Roy, seeing that his 'work of over a decade was undone . . . taken away and turned against' him, shocked by the treachery of persons whom he had trusted and with whom he had worked for years (R. P. Dutt and Clemens Dutt, G. A. K. Luhani, G. Safarov, Shaukat Usmani, one of his earliest converts from among the Muhajirs, etc.), depressed by the rise of the Nazis and the perverse activities of the 'linie' communists in seeking the destruction of the Weimar republic in the name of the 'theory of catastrophe', suffering again from the recurrence of acute pain in his ear, was in very low spirits. Ellen, too, was passing through very hard times and much strain in her personal relationships. She had kept her job, but renounced her party membership; her private life with 'Leo' was also in a bit of a mess. For both Roy and Ellen, love was a great experience which helped them regain their inner strength and equipoise. But Roy had already decided to return to India where endless hazards awaited him, so they agreed to keep their new-found feelings to themselves and not meet for a while.

The following morning Roy went to the hospital for the operation. Apart from the very painful inflammation of the conical bone behind his right ear and accumulating puss, he also suffered from enlargement of the heart caused by the severity of the return trip from China across the Mongolian deserts. After the operation he passed into an alarmingly long state of coma. Louise then rang Ellen, and when Roy recovered consciousness, his feelings could no longer be concealed. During the next two months of recovery the three were often together; from time to time Roy and Ellen were alone by themselves. At the end of October Roy bade farewell to Louise and his intimate friends in Berlin. Before starting on his perilous life in India he rested for the first three weeks of November in Merano, a resort village in the Tyrolean Alps. At a wayside station he was joined by Ellen, and the two had a brief but very happy time together at Pensione Pitscheider, Villa Helibrun.[29] On 24 November they parted at the railway station at Verona, Ellen returning to Germany, Roy moving onward on his new Odyssey with a false passport in the name of Banerji.

From the letters he wrote to both Louise and Ellen it is possible to reconstruct the outline of Roy's movements during the next seven/eight months.[30] After two nights on the train he reached Istambul on 26 November where he put up at Hotel Stamboul Palace, Boulevard de l'Independence, 245, Pera. He left on 29 November and was in Baghdad early in December where he stayed at Maude Hotel, Residency Road, No 51–39, Right Bank Maude Avenue. He visited the tomb of Harun-al-Rashid and was much impressed by the architecture of 'the wonderful huge mosque'. He reached Karachi on 11 December, and on 17 December was in Bombay. Here Tayab Shaikh and Sundar Kabadi arranged his temporary hide-out in the Theosophical Society's colony at Juhu. The new alias which he adopted was Dr Mahmood, professedly 'a new recruit in the Civil Service'. He had to build virtually from scratch, train a new group of co-workers, write and publish from underground, move about and meet people without being caught by the secret service agents, and do all this without any financial resources of his own. On 25 December he enclosed with his letter to Ellen a review of the political situation 'to be delivered to either Heinz [Brandler] or August [Thalheimer] personally'. He asked for German newspapers and other material wrapped in bourgeois publications, to be mailed for him at 'International News Service, Mahendra Mansion, Esplanade Road, Fort, Bombay'. He strongly discouraged both Ellen and Louise from coming to India where there was 'boundless repression'. On 31 December he wrote from Bombay asking for details of the Communist Opposition Conference. On 10 January he reported also from Bombay that 'we are publishing two papers—one in English for the whole country, the other in the dialect spoken by local workers'—both published illegally since they were in no position to make the security deposit which, in any case, was sure to be forfeited. The English paper was *Independent India*, but I have not been able to trace the Marathi paper. The letter also mentioned that his co-workers had gained control of three big trade unions. In his January letters he described the expansion of the activities of his 'boys'—trade union work, publications, mass meetings—and his own precarious living and 'nocturnal visits to town'. In February they were 'turning out a large quantity of literature, mostly in Indian languages'. He wrote to both Louise and Ellen separately that his circumstances and activities being what they were, no arrangement was possible for either of them to live and work in India. 'A revolutionary has no business to fall in love' (letter to Ellen dated 13 February 1931). On 16 March he was in Lucknow going about in homespun khadi, 'a 300 p.c. orthodox Gandhist'. Bombay had become too dangerous, and even here he had to be 'constantly on the move'. On 30 March he was staying as Dr Mahmood in the Congress camp at Karachi. The letters in April and May did not give place names, but the contents made it clear that he was in U.P. again, probably also in the Punjab, involved in agitational and organizational work among the poor peasants. 'For the last several weeks I have been constantly on the run' (letter to Ellen dated 4 May 1931). On 28 May he was 'back to the base again but only for a short time'. In June he was in Bombay and wanted chapters 2, 18, 19 and postscript of the English manuscript of his China book to be sent to him together with copies of his series on the 'Crisis in the Comintern'. On 20 June he wrote to Ellen to contact Louise from whom he had not heard for two months. He also gave her a safe address for sending the manuscript by registered mail: Secretary, Study Circle, Toyo Poddar Cotton Mills, De Lisle Road, Bombay. On 3 July Ellen was informed about Louise's sudden arrival in Bombay on 1 July without previous notice; she had been immediately placed under constant watch by the police. The letter of 10 July mentioned Roy's brief meeting with Louise and her departure for Lucknow where she would be looked after by Brajesh Singh; the textile strike and the looming strike in the railways; the plan for the inaugural meeting of the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class; and asked her to scrap all old addresses and use a new cover address: Abdul Karim Sarafally, Saraf Mansion, Princess Street, Bombay. On 13 July he reported the 'great victory' of his co-workers at the Calcutta session of the All-India Trade Union Congress—the 'Linie' Communists had split away from the AITUC, formed their own Red TUC and thus 'committed suicide'. Tayab Shaikh had been elected one of the Secretaries of the AITUC; the President and two vice-Presidents were also quite close to Roy. On 20 July Roy wrote his last letter of this period. He mentioned that Louise's arrival had made his situation more difficult and she would have to go back to Europe; that his own letters were being intercepted by the police; that if Ellen still wanted to come he was in no position to offer any financial assistance towards her trip; that she did not in her last letter seem as optimistic as before about the possibility of her getting 'a job with the Doctor at Ranchi'; and that even if he himself were persuaded by the insistence of his comrades in Germany to return to Europe, he would not be able to do so because any money raised for his passage would be better used for the expanding activities in India. The next morning he was arrested.

The record of Roy's activities during the seven months of his underground existence was quite impressive. Readers will find details in the introductory editorial notes and footnotes in the latter sections of the present volume. This was acknowledged in the report of the Director of the Intelligence Bureau. 'Despite the fact that the police were continually hot on his heels . . . his doctrines gained many adherents in Bombay and the United Provinces and at a later date also in Calcutta and its environs. He made serious and by no means unsuccessful endeavours to impregnate the Congress with his views and was received, and well received, by several of the Congress leaders in different parts of India.'[31] He trained and organized new groups of radicals and involved them in trade-union work and the peasant movement. His followers gained control of the AITUC shortly before his arrest. He wrote and got published a large quantity of literature in English and in Indian languages, and brought out two periodicals, *Independent India* from Bombay and *The Masses* from Calcutta. Jawaharlal Nehru adopted a number of his ideas and part of Roy's 'minimum programme', and he made use of Roy's spadework among peasants in U.P. in launching the no-tax campaign.

After Roy's arrest and imprisonment he continued to write and smuggle out from jail manuscripts and instructions to his comrades. Among these manuscripts secretly conveyed out of jail only one is included in this volume as its final item. Roy's iron constitution was already irreparably damaged, but his indomitable spirit was not affected by hardships or the gathering darkness. *My Defence*, or *I Accuse* is the voice of a modern Prometheus who proclaims his faith in freedom and justice against all oppressors and exploiters.

This volume was originally planned to cover the period 1928 to 1936. But the new and previously unstudied source material found in the archives abroad proved to be so interesting and abundant that I had to change my plan and divide the period in two equal segments. Even then I have had to leave out a considerable part of the material in my present collection. The fourth volume will cover the period 1932–36 and include selections from his prison manuscripts as well as material smuggled out of jail. In the present volume I have provided more introductory and explanatory notes than in the two previous volumes, especially regarding personalities and events which relate to the Soviet Union and the West. I have also included a select bibliography for the three volumes together. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but may prove helpful to young researchers who wish to carry further my admittedly quite incomplete investigations into the phenomenon of revolutionary movements in our century. SNR.

Notes

[1] The details are gathered from the *Protokolls* and the '*Thesen und Resolutionen*' of the Sixth and Seventh Plenums of the ECCI, pub. Hamburg 1926 and 1927; and reports published in *Inprekorr*, VI and VII.

[2] This report is included in *For a Revolution from Below*, ed. Sibnarayan Ray, Cal., 1989, pp. 17–39. It was originally published in *China Report*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1988.

[3] See articles by Tan Chung, Chen Fengjun, Zhang Guangyu and Feng Chongyi in

China Report, Vol. 24, No. 1. My correspondence with some of the scholars in Communist China confirms this growing appreciation of Roy's impact.

[4] M. N. Roy, *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, Moscow–Leningrad, 1929.

[5] That Kuusinen and Neumann tried to secure Roy's support for the new catastrophic policy and were 'harshly rebuffed' by the latter was mentioned by the editor of *Das Volksrecht* (No. 20, 17 May 1929) in his introductory note to R.'s first article in that journal. I have gathered a number of other details from conversations with persons with first-hand knowledge. These will be drawn upon in my projected biography.

[6] Details gathered from interview with Louise Geissler in Zurich.

[7] R. P. Dutt's book *Modern India* and M. N. Roy's *The Future of Indian Politics*, both published in 1926, presented very similar facts and conclusions regarding contemporary British policy and Indian developments. The views of both were under attack in 1928, first by Varga (*Inprecor*, VIII, No. 15, 14 March 1928), and then by Kuusinen at the Sixth Congress itself (*Inprecor*, VIII, No. 68, 4 Oct. 1928). According to a letter from R. P. Dutt to Muzaffar Ahmad (4 April 1960), the former had been asked to report on the colonial question at the Sixth Congress, but declined on medical grounds. After the Congress Roy visited Dutt in Brussels. 'I informed him that I considered the criticism and line of the 6th Congress to be correct . . . This was the last time that I saw Roy, with whom I had previously worked closely' (M. Ahmad, *Myself and the CPI*, Calcutta, 1970, p. 480). At the Seventh Congress (25 July to 20 Aug. 1935) Dutt was elected a candidate member of ECCI. He retained his leadership of CPGB, together with Harry Pollitt, by completely acquiescing with the Stalinist line, and this highly intelligent man kept on trimming his sails to the Stalinist wind and became the guru of the Indian communists.

[8] J. T. Murphy, who was a British member of the Comintern *apparatchiki* during the twenties, subsequently claimed in his memoirs: 'I was in charge of the British section . . . [it] meant not merely England but the Dominions, India and the colonies.' About Roy he wrote: 'Of all the Indians I have met he was the most arrogant and showed his hatred of the white man, especially the Englishman, in his every glance . . . He was expelled from the ranks of communism on charges which he admitted to the Control Commission of which I was a member.'. (J. T. Murphy, *New Horizons*, London, 1941, p. 240.)

Murphy was at no time in charge of India and the colonies, although this Comintern functionary might have wished to be put in charge. Stalin appointed him a member of the International Control Commission at the Sixth Congress, but since Roy had left Moscow before the Congress, Murphy's statement regarding Roy's admission of charges against him to the Control Commission is a blatant lie, typical of Stalinist concoction. Comintern records do not show that Roy appeared before any Control Commission to which he admitted any charges made against him. Another British Communist leader, R. P. Dutt's elder brother C. P. Dutt, wrote to Muzaffar Ahmad (27 April 1960) that 'by the end of 1927 Roy had already come under heavy criticism for his policy and actions in China'. This is another canard frequently repeated. Roy's China report was officially published from Moscow in 1929; and there is no record in Comintern Protokolls or resolutions that Roy was ever censured for his policy in China.

[9] *Der I Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale: Protokoll, Marz 1919*, Hamburg, 1921, p. 185 *et seq.*

[10] *Protokoll des III Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1921; *Thesen und Resolutionen des III Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1921.

[11] Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, Ann Arbor, 1962, p. 336.

[12] Borkenau, ib., chap. XX, 'The Leap into the Abyss', pp. 332–56. For the official communist equation of social democracy with social fascism, *Xe Session du Comite Executif de l' Internationale Communiste*, Paris, 1929.

[13] *Protokoll des 6 Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1928, Vol. 4.

[14] E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926–29*, Vol. I, Penguin, 1974, Chap. 12, pp. 291–356.

[15] For Bukharin's view, 'Notes of an Economist' (*Pravda*, 30 Sept. 1928), translated and included in Bertram D. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost*, New York, 1957. Bukharin's view was supported by Tomsky and Rykov. The view was severely attacked by Stalin and others and rejected at CPSU Central Committee's meeting in April 1929. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow, 1953, pp. 309–72.

[16] For accounts of Bukharin's removal from leadership positions, Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, London, 1970, Chap. XX, 'The Defeat of Bukharin', pp. 365–81; E. H. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, Vol. 2, Penguin, 1976, Chap. 41, 'The Right Deviation', pp. 80–105.

[17] In his letter to me of 13 July 1988 the First Director, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Moscow, explained that while proposals for Roy's exclusion were tabled and discussed in earlier meetings, the actual decision was taken on 23 November 1929, according to the records in the Institute's archives. He kindly sent me a copy of the resolution. It may be noted that in November 1929 the CPSU Central Committee removed Bukharin from the Politbureau. On 29 November 1929 *Pravda* published the recantation of Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky.

[18] Much of what I know about Roy's life and activities during this period is derived partly from material preserved in several archives in Europe, and partly from interviews and conversations with Louise Geissler, Tayab Shaikh, Ellen Roy and Anadi Bhaduri who were close associates of his at this time. After the first unsuccessful operation in Moscow, he had a second and successful operation for mastoiditis by a Berlin surgeon, Professor Kobrack. His right ear, however, was permanently damaged.

[19] *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, p. 513.

[20] Shaikh published his biography under the pen-name A. K. Hindi. *M. N. Roy: The Man Who Looked Ahead*, was published from Ahmedabad early in 1938. The table of contents of a projected second volume in 17 chapters was announced in the first volume, but it was probably never completed, and was certainly not published. The first volume brought the story of Roy's life to 1930. Shaikh's relationship with the Bombay 'Royists' deteriorated in the late thirties as he came to be replaced by V. B. Karnik as Roy's right-hand man.

[21] Thus, for example, in Xu Qian's speech of welcome at a banquet in Hankou on 8 April 1927. An English translation of this Chinese text is provided by Huang I-shu in 'Chinese Source Materials on M. N. Roy', *For a Revolution from Below*, ed. Sibnarayan Ray, Calcutta, 1989, pp. 33–7.

[22] Information about Louise Geissler's life is based on my conversations with her and two letters from her, supplemented by a letter from A.C.N. Nambiar dated 4 August 1977 and a note from Karl Lang of Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv, Zurich, dated 9 March 1988. Louise eventually moved to Zurich and became a Swiss citizen. She kept in touch with the local Communist Party, but did not become a member. She had a collection of letters, photographs and material relating to Roy which she showed me during my visits to her Zurich apartment. At that time she had in her possession Roy's personal letters to her from February 1928 to April 1933. After Roy's break with the Comintern Louise worked for some time as an employee of General Motors Corporation. In old age she lived with her sister Eva Walter. After Louise's death in 1973, I wrote to Eva about Louise's papers, but she was evasive, and she referred me to Nambiar who had known Roy in 1929–30 and had lived with Eva (at that time Geissler) during those years in Berlin–Charlottenburg. Nothing very tangible came out of our prolonged correspondence except an informative letter from Nambiar. In 1987 when I enquired again Eva was living in an old-age asylum, and Dr Karl Lang informed me that none of the Louise–Roy papers could be traced.

[23] These and other personal details which follow are largely based on the five unpublished 'Notebooks' (1954–5) of Ellen Roy, notes from Karl Lang, Rose Froelich and

A. C. N. Nambiar, and conversations with M. N. Roy, Ellen Roy, Claire Thalheimer, Anadi Bhaduri and Ruth Fischer.

[24] Note from Karl Lang, Zurich.

[25] Notes from Nambiar, Zurich, and Ruth Fischer, Paris; also conversations with Roy and Ellen. Muenzenberg was two years younger than Roy, but during his youth in Zurich he had come in contact with Lenin, Krupskaya, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek and other leading Bolsheviks. He became the first President of the Communist Youth International which had its founding Congress in Moscow in 1920. In the twenties and thirties he organized a number of cultural front organizations and published several highly successful periodicals. The type called 'the fellow traveller' was his discovery. While continuing to be in the Comintern he founded his own publishing house, a book club, a film distribution company, and the Muenzenberg Trust which gave him a rare measure of economic independence. He did not agree with the extremist line of the Sixth Congress but did not oppose it publicly. After the Seventh Congress he became a leading organizer of the anti-fascist movement. Ellen worked under him for some time in Paris. In the late thirties he was summoned several times to Moscow, but did not go. He died in suspicious circumstances in 1940. Ruth Fischer thought that he was probably killed by NKVD agents in France. Muenzenberg's book *Die Dritte Front* (Berlin, 1930), is partly autobiographical, partly a history of the youth movement in the twenties.

[26] Ellen Roy's unpublished 'Notebook' No. II (1954).

[27] *The World Her Village, A Book of Ellen Roy*, edited by Sibnarayan Ray, Calcutta, 1979.

[28] The event is mentioned in Ellen's unpublished 'Notebook', and in several of Roy's unpublished personal letters to Ellen of 1931.

[29] When Ellen came to India in 1937 she brought with her some picture-postcards of the Merano pensione.

[30] Between November 1930 and 20 July 1931, there were thirty-five letters from Roy to Ellen, which she let me read in 1954. Subsequent quotations and details are drawn mostly from these unpublished and very personal letters. There might have been other letters intercepted and held back by the Intelligence Department.

[31] Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, 1935; new imprint Calcutta, 1976, p. 163.

SNR.

SELECTED WORKS
1927–28

1. Die Internationalen Verbundeten der Opposition in der KPdSU
   (The International Allies of the Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union)

2. 'Assembly Letter'

3. Draft Resolution on the Indian Question

The International Allies of the Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

To the best of this editor's knowledge this is the first time that a translation is being published in English of the original M. N. Roy text in German, *Die Internationalen Verbundeten der Opposition in der KPdSU*. The German edition was published from Hamburg and Berlin by Carl Hoym Nachfolger in 1928; it ran to thirty pages and carried an advertisement of two earlier books by M. N. Roy, *Indien* (1922, German version of *India in Transition*) and *Indiens Politische Zukunft* (1927, *The Future of Indian Politics 1926*). The present English translation has been specially made for the *Selected Works* and has not been published before in any form.

Although I have not succeeded in tracing any English edition of this booklet, there is a French version of the same text under the title *Les Allies Internationaux de l'Opposition du P. C. de l'U.R.S.S.* published by Bureau d'Editions de Diffusion et de Publicite, 132 Faubourg Saint-Denis, Paris xe. The French edition has forty pages and carries the publication date 1927. Neither the French nor the German version mentions any translator. Roy's introduction to the text refers to the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev as having taken place 'at the completion of this manuscript'. Roy returned to Moscow from China in late August or very early in September; Zinoviev and Trotsky were expelled from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 23 October 1927 and from the CPSU itself on 14 November. It seems, therefore, reasonable to conclude that Roy wrote this booklet probably first in French and then in German in September–November 1927, and the French edition was published shortly before the German edition. It is quite conceivable that he did not write any English version since what was under attack would have been neither familiar nor of any interest to his English-knowing readers in India.

The Hoover Library, Stanford, and Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris furnished me respectively with a photocopy each of the German and the French editions. None of the earlier writers on M. N. Roy (American, Russian or Indian, e.g. North, Windmiller, Haithcox, Gordon, Hindi, Ahmad, Adhikari, Karnik, Reznikov, Persits, etc.) has examined or discussed this booklet. It shows Roy very deeply involved in the struggle in the CPSU and the Comintern which reached its climax in 1927. At this stage the old rivals Zinoviev and Trotsky had patched up their quarrel, and were desperately trying to build a common Opposition to Stalin who had temporarily won Bukharin to his side. Outside the Soviet Union the Opposition enjoyed considerable support among Communists and Communist sympathizers in Germany, France, Holland and Italy. The Opposition had published the Platform of Eighty-Three and was planning to hold an international conference of Left Communists at Berlin at the end of 1927. In this brochure Roy attacked vigorously the allies of Trotsky and Zinoviev in the major Communist parties of West Europe and defended the official line of Bukharin and Stalin. It is ironical that in a few months' time Roy would himself be subjected to severe attack as the official Comintern line changed drastically in 1928, and he would be expelled from the Comintern in 1929 on the charge of having published in the Opposition press his disagreement with the new official line. Of course the Opposition with which Roy would align himself in 1929 would be that of Brandler–Thalheimer, very different from the Trotsky–Zinoviev Opposition he attacked in 1927.

I have given in the general introduction to this volume some idea of the conflicts and controversies of the period in the CPSU and the Comintern. A few explanatory notes and details are also given at the end of this text. Between 1926 and 1929 two main Opposition clusters formed, one around Trotsky–Zinoviev, the other around Bukharin in the USSR and Brandler–Thalheimer in Germany. By 1929–30 full control of both the CPSU and the Comintern was seized by Stalin and his men. Roy's 1927 essay was clearly partisan. By 1929–30 Roy's own assessment of the CPSU and Comintern leadership changed greatly in response to changes taking place in both. In the later section of this volume this change is fully explicated. SNR.

Introduction

1. On the completion of his manuscript Trotsky and Zinoviev [spelling in the German text Sinowjew—SNR] were expelled from the Party.[1] They went the way of their international allies. The actions of the Opposition which placed their leaders outside the Party ranks did not constitute factional activity within the Party; they were the actions of a second Party which was determined to depose the Party in power.

2. According to a resolution arrived at by the Central Committee, an open discussion within the Party was initiated a month before the Party conference. The Opposition refused to take part in the discussion and insisted on bringing the party discussion before non-party members, especially before non-proletarian elements. Indeed, the Opposition was effectively no longer a faction within the Party, it became a second Party. At the anniversary of the October revolution, the Opposition attempted to organize a demonstration against the Party and the proletarian state. It formed illegal party organizations and distributed its own publication.[2] Finally, it went so far as to attempt to organize a strike in a factory. All these efforts of the Opposition were in vain. Nevertheless, the fact remains that these attempts were made, and where could they lead to? Had the requisite forces been present they would logically lead to the revolt against the proletarian state. Thus, it was no polemic exaggeration if the opposition was portrayed as the ally of all those forces which conspire within and outside the USSR to overthrow the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

3. The leaders of the Opposition are no fools. While they conspired to organize an attempt on the Leninist Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union through the Communist International, they noticed that their international allies were a rather discredited lot. Therefore, they did not tie their fate to that of their comrades. They resolved to force a decision by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union prior to the 15th party conference.[3] The situation became intolerable. Zinoviev and Trotsky were then expelled from the Party.

4. Those excluded from the ranks of the communists in countries outside the USSR either retreated into aimless sectionalism or drifted toward social democracy. But the fate of those within the USSR is more tragic. Here, not only the principles and the organized

solidarity of the Party had to be maintained, but it was a question of defending the first proletarian state in the history of all nations. The Opposition did not only veer from Leninism, it not only attempted to destroy the Bolshevik party and the Communist International, it also endeavoured to overthrow the proletarian state. It attempted to replace the dictatorship of the proletariat with middle class democracy. It called on anti-Soviet forces and sought to mobilize them in the struggle against the Party of proletarian dictatorship. This ultimate development conformed to the nature of the Opposition. According to its essentially Menshevik nature, it had to stand outside the Communist Party before long.[4]

The International Allies of the Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

The Opposition accuses the Communist International of opportunistic deviation. It alleges that while the Communist International supports the rightist elements in all parties and seeks to draw closer to the reformists of all countries, it hounds out of its ranks the 'revolutionary leftist elements'. For this reason the Opposition has taken on the task of organizing the 'revolutionary leftist elements' for the struggle against the 'Thermidorianism' of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[5] Zinoviev openly announced that he was determined to organize an Opposition Party within the Communist International. After being totally crushed and discredited within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (KPdSU) the Opposition has the intention of appearing before the 15th Party Congress and laying claim there to the support of the organized 'leftist revolutionary factions' (within and outside the Communist Party) in a number of western European countries. This would be an attack on the Leninist Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party through the means of the Communist International itelf. It is an attempt to undermine the Communist International in the interest of the beaten and bankrupt Opposition of the KPdSU after allying itself with the counter-revolutionary trash within the Comintern.

Who Supports the Opposition?

Let us look more closely at the international allies of the Opposition. The company one keeps characterizes the man. Who and what are these 'revolutionary leftist elements' who support the Opposition and are supported by it? Organized factions and groups which declare themselves to be partly or wholly in solidarity with the Opposition exist in Germany, France, Holland and Italy. These groups have organizational contact with the Opposition. They are composed of ultra-leftist and ultra-rightist elements which were expelled from the Communist Parties of the various countries, of small ultra-leftist groups which are still within the Party, and of anarcho-syndicalist elements. The allies of the Opposition are strongest in Germany. But here also they are fragmented into a number of groups who are nevertheless united in their counter-revolutionary attack on the Central Committee of the KPdSU and in their attempt to split the Communist International. With the exception of the Maslow–Fischer–Urbahns group, none of them has ever had any influence on the masses.[6] The elections in Hamburg and Altona have shown that the Maslow group has also totally lost the confidence of the masses and is as isolated today as are the others.

One can roughly divide the ultra-leftist enemies of the Comintern into two classes. Firstly, lower middle-class intellectuals who confront the problems of the working class not from the viewpoint of the masses but from the height of their intellectual isolation. Secondly, disillusioned proletarian elements who have lost their belief in the revolution and have been driven into counter-revolutionary anarcho-syndicalism. To the first category belong the Maslow–Fischer–Katz–Korsh–Schwarz group in Germany, the Souvarine–Loriot group in France (which gained increased strength from their former opponent Treint), the Bordiga people in Italy and a few unimportant outsiders in other countries.[7] The Weber–Kotter group (the so-called Weddinger Opposition) in Germany, the NAS in Holland and the anarcho-syndicalist elements surrounding Rosmer and Monatte in France beong to the second category.[8]

The most evident trait of this 'unholy international alliance' is its lack of principle. It includes the ultra-leftist Bordiga people as well as the ultra-rightist Loriot. Within its fold there is room for the 'dogmatic leftist' Schwarz and for the Dutchman de Kat, who was in favour of the return of the Communists into the ranks of the Social-democratic parties, so that they could wait there for 'a more favourable opportunity for the revolution'. It shelters the 'dogmatic' Trotskyite Souvarine as well as the former champion of anti-Trotskyism Treint. It sympathizes with the Opposition and supports it against Leninism in common with social democrats and middle-class intellectuals. These are the characteristics of the international allies of the Opposition.

The 'ultra-leftists', within and outside the Party, put up theories which have no relationship to the realities of the present situation. They do not believe it necessary to free the masses from the influence of the social democrats and bring them under that of the communists. If the masses do not follow the 'ultra-leftist' sectarians, so much the worse for the masses. The 'ultra-leftist' heroes think that they themselves will make the revolution, whilst in fact but imagining that it is coming. They call the Communist International opportunistic because it recognizes the reality of the relative stabilization of capitalism.[9] They cannot distinguish between a revolutionary period and an acute revolutionary situation. The essential point of their theory is that the proletarian revolution will arrive as soon as the Comintern ignores the reality of a relative stabilization of capitalism and that the majority of the working class still follows the reformist leaders. The proletarian revolution will break out in response to the call of the 'ultra-leftists' as soon as they have conquered the Communist International. The walls of capitalist Jericho will fall as soon as a Maslow, a Fischer, or a Souvarine will blow the horn. They have been blowing the horn for years. Capitalism will not collapse in a heap of ruins overnight; the masses will tire of the 'ultra-left', but the Communist International under the banner of Leninism moves steadily toward the proletarian revolution.

The True Character of the Ultra-left

The bitter experience in Germany during the political leadership of Maslow–Fischer shows that with an 'ultra–left' theory the Comintern would become an isolated sect. The masses would continue to remain at the mercy of the social-democratic betrayal, and the war planned by the capitalist powers against the USSR would then take place under such unfavourable terms. For this reason the 'ultra-leftist theory' is not only liquidatory; in the guise of radical phraseology it becomes an ally of the counter-revolution.

Such being its nature, the 'ultra-leftist' theory also unavoidably appears in counter-revolutionary political forms. Malicious attacks and lying propaganda against the USSR are currently the most noticeable characteristics of the 'ultra-left'. It claims that the nature of government in the USSR is not that of proletarian dictatorship, but that it is a 'dictatorship of the Kulaks', that the October revolution is a bourgeois revolution, that the Soviet economy is a capitalist economy. Only one conclusion can be drawn from these unfounded and often refuted assertions. What conclusion? That the government of the Soviet Union has to be brought down. This conclusion fits the capitalist attacks on the USSR particularly well. The political surrender of the 'ultra-leftists' to the counter-revolution is masked by the theory of 'Thermidor' and of the 'second revolution'. The 'ultra-leftists' are the enemies of the USSR as much as the reformist social democrats and the middle class counter-revolution. These are the allies of the Opposition.

The Opposition has not united with these ideologically bankrupt, politically scurrilous, disorganized and objectively counter-revolutionary elements without knowing their real nature. As Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, Zinoviev called the German 'ultra-leftists' of the Maslow–Fischer group 'shiftless elements some of whom may stand tomorrow on the other side of the barricade'. Today they all stand on the other side of the barricade and they stand there as the allies of the Opposition. The stand of the ultra-leftists was critically analysed and totally repudiated in the famous 'Open Letter' that the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) addressed to the Communist Party of Germany.[10] At that time Zinoviev was chairman of the ECCI and was one of its signatories. It is appropriate that we recall the assessment of the ultra-left with which Zinoviev had agreed before he joined the present unholy alliance.

As Zinoviev Condemned his Present Comrades

Maslow, the most prominent figure of the international allies of the Opposition, was accused in the 'Open Letter' of combating Lenin under the pretence of fighting Trotskyism. This was a very correct assessment with which Zinoviev agreed because he was at that time still a Leninist. Maslow is still fighting Lenin. Today he does it—not with any kind of mask, but openly and shamelessly—while he himself stands on the platform of Trotskyism, which he had zealously torn apart four years ago. Today he says: 'Trotskyism is only a rumour, a fairytale' (*Die Fahne des Kommunismus*, 7 October 1927).

Incidentally, it should be recalled that already in 1924 when Zinoviev and Kamenev led the fight against Trotskyism, the ultra-rightist French Souvarine–Rosmer–Monatte group, which was supported by the English renegades Newbold, Postgate, etc. had undertaken the task of proving that Trotskyism was only a legend or invention (of Trotsky's rivals and critics).[11] How closely the 'ultras' of both extremes stand to one another! But let Maslow himself attest to the reality of Trotskyism:

> Comrade Trotsky a few years ago had a new edition of his book of 1905 published without making any changes, thus holding on to the obviously false theory of the 'permanent revolution' . . . . The theory of permanent revolution was a mainstay of Trotskyism. This theory is apparently still upheld by Comrade Trotsky today. But this theory is absolutely irreconcilable with Leninism. [*The Tow Russian Revolutions of the Year 1917*, published 1925.]

So in 1924 Maslow not only acknowledged Trotskyism, but he fought it as being incompatible with Leninism. Today he is openly associated with Trotsky in his lifelong struggle against Leninist bolshevism, but in his characteristically deceitful way he raises the flag of 'orthodox Marxism–Leninism'.

In 1925, as Chairman of the Communist International, Zinoviev was of the opinion that 'the executive must at no price tolerate this [Maslow's] monstrous attack on Lenin and on Leninism'. Today, as an enemy of the Comintern, Zinoviev discovers in Maslow a true follower of Lenin, and a defender of 'orthodox Marxism–Leninism.' He allies himself with Maslow to fight for the breaking up of the Party and the International that Lenin formed and built up. Maslow has not changed. He is no Leninist. He never was a Leninist. He remains what he always was, an intellectual demagogue, a political adventurer without principles. But Zinoviev sank from being a pupil of Lenin's to an enemy of Lenin's.

Maslow always remained a stranger to the Communist International. He never agreed with its basic principles. He fought Leninism at all times. In the years 1923 to 1925 he fought the Bolshevik tactic of the united front which was adopted in order to win the majority of the working class and he called this tactic a 'veering to the right', a 'concession to Trotskyism'. Zinoviev then declared that Maslow and his ultra-leftist followers were incapable of understanding the principles of Bolshevism which govern the Communist International.

'The ideology of Comrade Maslow is not only tactically but in principle opposed to Leninism', this was written in the ECCI's Open Letter. Two years ago Zinoviev signed the Open Letter that bound all members of the Communist Party 'to break with all force the non-bolshevik system of the party relationship to the Comintern which was advocated by the Maslow–Ruth Fischer group'. Now he has entered into an alliance with the same anti-Bolshevik group to fight against the Comintern. The Open Letter accused the ultra-left Maslow–Fischer of lacking principles and asserted firmness of principle to be a characteristic of Bolshevism. Their subsequent deeds—open avowal of Trotskyism, which they had formerly claimed to be fighting, their enmity against the USSR, their attacks on the Comintern—proved that the ultra-leftists well deserved this condemnation. They are the unscrupulous outcasts from the communist ranks. Their support does not strengthen but discredits the Opposition.

This openly hostile stand against the USSR under this or that lame excuse is no new occurrence with the ultra-leftists. It has its predecessor in the so-called 'Away from Moscow' rallying cry which the Maslow–Fischer group already raised in 1924. This 'Away from Moscow' call is a characteristically social-democratic stance. The Centrist elements, such as the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany, the Italian Maximalists, the Independent Labour Party of England and the Norwegian Labour Party, all returned to the Second International under the pretext that they were not in agreement with the 'Moscow Dictatorship'.[12] The anti-Moscow mood gave Levi, Frossard, Hoglund, Tranmael, etc. the pretext under which they left the Communist International. By taking this already traditional attitude against Moscow, the ultra-leftists exposed their essentially counter-revolutionary social democratic nature. The objective basis of their so-called 'Away from Moscow' direction is investigated in the Open Letter. It was characterized there as an expression of the new orientation of the German bourgeoisie:

> This process is also partly present in the KPD [Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands—Communist Party of Germany]. The so-called ultra-left trend is sometimes only a cover for the social democratic, reformist, 'Levite' disposition which threatens to change into a direct betrayal of the international working class. [*Open Letter*.]

The ultra-leftist groups in Germany and other countries which join with the Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (KPdSU) represent the fully developed form of the criticized and condemned tendencies mentioned in the Open Letter.

Maslow and Ruth Fischer were expelled from the German Communist Party on 19 August 1926. Their expulsion was confirmed at the Seventh Enlarged Plenary Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI).[13] The reasons for their expulsion were: 1. ideological and organizational collaboration with the 'ultra-leftist groups' which had already been expelled previously and had become open enemies of the party; 2. formation of factions; 3. breach of discipline. At about the same time Ruth Fischer, after her return from Moscow, spread shameless lies about the USSR at an open meeting in Berlin. She said that in the USSR the ten-hour working day prevailed and that women were forced to do night work. After their expulsion from the party they formally and without reservation signed the programme of the Opposition in the KPdSU.

The Campaign of Lies

Since then they have incessantly conducted a base campaign of lies and slander against the USSR, the KPdSU and the Comintern. Such a campaign can only have one aim—to poison the spirit of the international working classes. Here are some examples of their false propaganda:

> 1. 'The strategic plan of the opportunists in the "leadership" consists of the following points: payment of 100 to 150 million gold roubles annually to the imperialists in order to buy themselves out of the war; abolition of export monopoly; . . . extension of the . . . rights of certain sections and strata of the bourgeoisie; practical abolition of the nationalization of landed property; non-intervention in revolutionary movements abroad, especially in China.' [*Fahne des Kommunismus* No. 29, 30 September 1927.]

These lies were repeated daily despite the fact that they were conclusively refuted. By authority and in the name of the Opposition, this demagogic campaign of lies is carried on with the aim of harming the USSR.

> 2. 'The opportunistic performance of the leading faction of the Russian Party stems from the acceptance of an absolute stabilization of capitalism.' [*Fahne des Kommunismus*, No. 29, 30 September 1927.]

This consciously false imputation is the basis for the accusation that the present Central Committee of the KPdSU does not believe in a world revolution and intends to liquidate the Communist International.

> 3. 'Their politics [i.e. of the Central Committee of the KPdSU] amounts to the accommodation of the ranks, elements, parties and Internationals, which appear especially stable to every opportunist looking for every method of stabilization: the well-to-do peasants in Russia, the reformists abroad.' [*Fahne des Kommunismus*, No. 23, 29 August 1927.]

With all their dexterity in lying and falsification, the renegades here stand in line with the social democrats, who also say that communism has been abandoned in the USSR, that capitalism is making constant progress there, and that the rich peasants rule. The recent proposal of the Independent Labour Party of England that the two Internationals should amalgamate was also based on the view that the Comintern has given up the programme of world revolution. But long before this proposal was formally made the Comintern had rejected it scornfully and developed anew its revolutionary programme as well as given its call for an uninterrupted struggle against capitalism. Even the reformists know this better than the 'ultra-leftist' renegades. The Labour Party of Great Britain rejected the proposal of amalgamation because it knows that the Comintern stands fast on the platform of Leninism, that proletarian dictatorship is firmly based in one-sixth part of this world, that the socialist structure in the USSR is progressing fast, and that the KPdSU is not only far from liquidating the Comintern but is in fact injecting it with new vigour.

> 4. Conditions in the USSR are described as showing economic and political growth of the Kulaks (or disenfranchised, landed property owners), growth of private capital, and as an expression of the same, a strong movement among the new bourgeois intelligentsia. These factors are then claimed to have led, together with the poor material position of the workers and the above outlined international policy, to the significant abasement of the political activity of the proletariat of the USSR. [*Fahne des Kommunismus*, No. 19, 22 July 1927.]

Shameless lies. In 1926, 54.5 per cent of the total participants in the election to the urban soviets in the RSFSR were unionized workers. This year the ratio is 63.4 per cent. In industrial centres it is 100 per cent. 64 per cent of the members of the Moscow soviets are workers. This year 75 per cent of the members are newly elected. While the poor peasants have been freed from taxes and can easily avail themselves of the benefits of the co-operative credit system, the Kulak or large landowners are burdened with higher taxes. The Kulak is isolated through the alliance of the middle and poor peasants, through the enormous progress of the agricultural co-operatives, which the middle peasantry is organizing against the Kulaks, and against private trade. In 1925, 105 million roubles were spent for the support of the village poor. Since last year the production of socialized industry has risen by 21 per cent. A milliard (or 1000 million) roubles were spent on electrification of the country. In comparison to the previous year, wages have risen 11.5 per cent. In 1924 the distribution of total industrial production was: 69.4 per cent in nationalized or state-owned industries; 5 per cent in co-operatives, and 24.9 per cent in private industry. In the following year these were respectively: 75.4 per cent, 6.5 per cent, and 18.1 per cent. In 1924, 75 per cent of the trade was in private hands. This year the corresponding share has dropped to 16 per cent. The average yearly income of the worker rose from 355 roubles in 1923 to 610 roubles this year. The leadership of the village co-operatives is composed of 39 per cent from poor peasants, 55 per cent from middle peasants and 6 per cent from the intellectuals. All these facts which we mention among untold others do not, however, prevent the Opposition from spreading lies which serve them as ammunition in their crusade against the USSR.

> 5. With reference to the question of war and the defence of the USSR the international allies of the Opposition find themselves in a difficult spot. The logical deduction from their propaganda against the USSR should be: It is a capitalistic country in whose defence the international proletariat is not interested. But they cannot utter such a sentiment publicly without being exposed to the international working class as the soldiers of the counter-revolution, which they in fact are. Thus they take refuge from this extremely important question in sophistry and hypocrisy. Nevertheless, the proletariat has recognized their inner attitude, and at the time of the elections has condemned them in the several strongholds of the ultra-left.

In the *Fahne des Kommunismus* [Banner of Communism], No. 2, 2 June 1927, Maslow wrote under the heading 'Hands off Soviet Russia':

> If the present leadership of the Comintern does not at the last minute

> totally and radically change its entire political and organizational course, the Communist International will then play the same role as the leadership of the Second International at the beginning of the World War.

The Second International supported the defence of the capitalistic 'fatherlands' and thereby betrayed the interests of the working class. Today the USSR is in danger of becoming embroiled in a war with the capitalistic world. The Communist International calls upon the working class of the whole world to defend the only fatherland of the proletariat. According to the renegades of the ultra-left it is just as criminal to defend the socialist fatherland as the capitalist fatherland. They say the USSR is a capitalistic state. Therefore its defence is a betrayal of the working class. They conduct this sleek counter-revolutionary campaign under the war-cry: 'Hands off Soviet Russia'. Greater sophistry and deception cannot be practised.

They bring up everything conceivable in order to convince others that the USSR is not a proletarian state. They can only have *one* motive for this, namely, to prevent the international proletariat from defending the USSR when the latter is attacked by the capitalistic world. This obvious enmity against the workers' republic is promoted by drawing a line of demarcation, which only exists in their imagination, between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the present Central Committee. This argument can deceive no one. It only proves on the contrary that the renegades of the ultra-left cynically push back the masses like a herd of dumb animals, and that they do not comprehend what a Party of the proletariat is. Intoxicated with intellectual self-conceit, they believe that the proletariat of the USSR has no will, no conviction, that it can be driven hither and thither by a few leaders like a herd of sheep. The social democrats and the bourgeoisie depict the Communist Party of the Soviet Union exactly in this manner. It is significant that the ultra-left renegades hold the same view of the proletarian Communist Party as the enemies of the proletarian revolution. Nevertheless they are sufficiently impudent to call themselves 'orthodox Marxist–Leninists' and to pass themselves off as the saviours of pure communism.

The International Allies of the Opposition on the Question of the Defence of the USSR

Called upon to give a clear answer to the question of the defence of the USSR the renegades explained:

> If we were to equate the Russian Party with this combination (Stalin–Bukharin–Rykov–Central Committee), if we could see only a trace of justification in their self-assigned equation of themselves with Soviet Russia, we

> would deem it proper not to lift a finger for a country and a regime, that would be identical with the Yaroslavski–Bukharin–Stalin Regime.[14] [*Fahne des Kommunismus*, No. 20, 22 July 1927.]

This is a very clear answer, this is a declaration of war. It is open solidarity with social democracy and the bourgeoisie who are mobilizing for war in order to overthrow 'the present regime in Russia'. In other words, the answer means: We wish to overthrow the present Central Committee of the KPdSU (which has the support of the whole Party and the Comintern). If this is not possible, it does not bother us if the USSR is attacked by the capitalistic powers. The factional activity of the Opposition and their international allies is thus inseperably linked with the preparation for war against the USSR.

This hostility against the USSR and against the Leninist Party of the victorious proletarian dictatorship is still more prominent in another 'ultra-leftist' group. Thus, for example, writes Korsch in his organ *Kommunistischen Politik*, No. 13–14, of August 1927:

> It is the Opposition's duty to fulfil the task of the entire Russian Communist Party. Aware and well organized it should fight against the entire Party, in order to fulfil the class-task. It should not shy away, if forced to do so, from a split.

Here the line of demarcation between party and leadership has disappeared. Now the dividing line is drawn between class and party—once again an anti-Marxist anti-Leninist point of view. These lines are only put up to disguise their true face. They will have to be removed, if the occasion arises, to expose the naked counter-revolutionary, political physiognomy of the international Opposition.

The renegade Korsch urges the Opposition to overthrow the Soviet might

According to Dr Korsch, 'the Opposition in the KPdSU has a great historic task, which it must fulfil without weakness and hesitation'. [*Kom. Pol.* No. 15–16.] This historic responsibility, it is found in the above citation, consists of splitting and destroying Lenin's Party. Dr Korsch explains that 'all leftist and all non-Russian sections of the Comintern have to support and push forward the Opposition [in the KPdSU] so that their task can be carried to its completion'. [*Kom. Pol.* No. 15–16.]

This position leads logically to the theory of a 'second revolution' which, as the 'ultra-leftist' accomplices of the Opposition predict, is necessary for Russia. Korsch and his group insidiously attack the Soviet Union not only as a capitalistic but also as an imperialistic country. They totally support the theory of 'red imperialism'. In the last issue of his *Kommunistische Politik* (No. 17–18), he writes that the background to the present international conflict is today no longer the antagonism between British and American imperialism; that the world today falls into two new groups of imperialistic states, namely, the English–American combination on the one side and the French–German–Russian block on the other; and that the next world war will be a result of the conflict between both these imperialistic combinations.

Korsch says that the Communist International has betrayed the Chinese Revolution in the interests of 'Russian State Capitalism'. He compares the Soviet policy in China with the American policy of the 'open door' and asserts that while the Second International represented the protection of property of all foreign capitalists, the Third International, as an agent of Russian state capitalism, naturally only turned against the privileges of and the concessions to the other foreign powers [*Kom. Pol.* No. 7.] About the question of the Chinese Eastern Railway he wrote:

> The Eastern Chinese Railways, for example, are defended by them as Russian property with exactly the same motives with which British imperialism, too, wants to protect its concessions, namely, because millions of Russia's national wealth are invested in them. [*Kom. Pol.* No. 7.]

Dr Korsch posed the question in such a way that it appeared as a struggle between the USSR and the Chinese people, as if the proletarian state had robbed the Chinese people of the ownership of the Chinese Eastern Railway. This is a malicious misrepresentation of the facts. The struggle broke out between the USSR and Japanese imperialism. By his attack on the 'red imperialism' of the USSR, Dr Korsch in reality supports the claims of Japanese imperialism on the Chinese Eastern Railway. He claims to defend the interests of the Chinese people against the 'red imperialism'; but in reality he supports the campaign of Japanese imperialism not only against the USSR but also against the Chinese people. It is superfluous to look into the stupid accusations which Dr Korsch and other renegades of his kind, in common with the counter-revolutionary enemies of the socialist republic, bring up against 'red imperialism'. Meanwhile, a few facts shall be cited, which prove that Korsch is a conscious liar. The USSR unconditionally gave up the right of extraterritoriality and the former Russian concessions in China. It scornfully rejected the unequal treaties which had been forced on China by the Czarist government. It renounced the monopoly rights over the Russian–Asiatic bank. Similar acts were also undertaken in other countries which were wholly or partly in the hands of Czarist imperialism, as for example in the Caucasian countries, Central Asia, Turkey, Persia and

Afghanistan. It was absolutely necessary to prevent the Chinese Eastern Railway from falling into the sphere of influence of Japanese imperialism, so that annexation of Manchuria as well as the constant threat of an attack on the USSR be averted.[15] But renegades like Korsch have no interest in the defence of the socialistic fatherland of the international working class. On the contrary, they lend their support to and collaborate with all attacks on the USSR.

Korsch and the whole ultra-leftist clan hate the Soviet Union. They do not bother to find reasons for their hate. They hate the USSR simply because they are counter-revolutionaries. Korsch and Schwarz assisted the social democrats in the notorious 'Grenade Campaign' against the Soviet Union. From the parliamentary rostrum they attacked the USSR, the Communist Party of Germany and the Comintern. Thereby they acted as agents of the bourgeoisie. In his organ *Entschiedene Linke* (Resolute Left) (No. 3) Schwarz writes that the USSR arms the counter-revolutionary German army and that the Comintern is defending the capitalistic fatherland Furthermore, he declares that the Comintern in the interest of New Economic Policy (NEP) in Russia has to promote the politics of nationalism. The Schwarz group has an anti-party and anti-union bias. It has joined the totally bankrupt Communist Workers' Party of Germany (KAPD), which was never accepted as a full member by the Comintern and from which the status of a 'sympathizer party' was withdrawn in 1923.

The Schwarz group is totally insignificant. It has no followers. It is so openly counter-revolutionary that the working class sees it as its enemy. Korsch and his group were expelled from the Comintern in June 1926. On 22 July 1926 the Presidium of the ECCI confirmed the expulsion of Korsch and Schwarz from the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) because they had 'aimed a series of counter-revolutionary attacks against the KPD, the Comintern and the proletarian dictatorship of USSR in the Communist Party and in public meetings and in Parliament (on 10 July 1926). . . . They are enemies of Communism against whom every party member must carry on the keenest fight.' Under the mantle of 'ultra-left', Korsch has systematically and consistently taken the social democratic standpoint with regard to the USSR. Just like the social democrats he speaks of 'red imperialism', of 'growing capitalism in the Soviet Union', and of the fact that 'the proletariat is oppressed by a small coterie of political adventurers'. He supplemented the social democratic lies with his now well-known counter-revolutionary theories of the '4 August of the Comintern' and the 'Second Russian Revolution'.

When Korsch became a raging counter-revolutionary, Zinoviev and Trotsky declared in writing to the Politbureau of the KPdSU that they had absolutely no connection with the Korsch group. Korsch meanwhile insisted throughout that he supported the Opposition and was in total agreement with their programme. This is quite in order, because Korschism is the logical continuation of the programme of the Opposition. But apart from ideological and political accord, the Opposition throughout this time stood in organizational communication with the ultra-left, despite the declarations of Zinoviev and Trotsky. This organizational connection lasts even now. The representatives of the Opposition in France and Italy and the allies of the Opposition in these countries are in close association with the Korsch group.

At this point we will disclose the nature of the type of men to be found among the destructive, faction-forming forces in the west European countries. People who were expelled from the Italian Party, because they maintained connections with the police, perform Oppositional faction work in France. People who were expelled from the Party and are alien to the Party are collected under the banner of the Opposition. Such collaborators support the ultra-right and the ultra-left elements within the Party with their destructive work. Under the pretext that the Comintern has become 'opportunistic' the Opposition has fallen into total passivity. It takes no part in the present struggle against the bourgeoisie, against Fascism, or against the threat of war. It declares that the danger of war only exists in a small measure. The question of the defence of the Soviet Union does not touch them. Their sole preoccupation consists of destructive criticism and of spreading the seed of pessimism and defeatism in the working class.

The French Allies of the Opposition

The allies of the Opposition in France are former Trotskyites and anarcho-syndicalists. These elements were only drawn to the communist movement in the acutely revolutionary post-war era through an emotional enthusiasm for the Russian revolution. One of the leading personalities of the French Opposition is Boris Souvarine, a typical lower middle class intellectual and a journalist of the 'boulevard press'. After an acquaintance of several years with the Communist movement, Souvarine returned to the fold of intellectual dilettantism as a bitter enemy of the Comintern and the Soviet Union. Rosmer and Monatte, who in any case are morally more reliable than Souvarine, in fact never quite broke with anarcho-syndicalism to which they have again reverted. Around their person crowd about a dozen lower middle class intellectuals who despise the masses, and a few disillusioned workers with an anarcho-syndicalistic past who have lost their way.

During the Trotsky-Opposition in the year 1923 Souvarine and Rosmer placed themselves totally on the side of the Opposition against the Central Committee of the KPdSU and the Comintern. In the theoretical organ of the Party, the *Bulletin Communiste* which Souvarine edited, various documents of the Trotsky-Opposition were regularly published. Souvarine as editor agreed completely with Trotsky's platform and wrote with acute bias against the Central Committee of the KPdSU. In the *Bulletin Communiste* Souvarine aimed strong attacks at those members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France who opposed Trotskyism. In short, Souvarine and Rosmer tried to get the French Party to officially repudiate Leninism and support the Trotsky-Opposition. As the French Party under the leadership and with the support of the Comintern renounced the Trotskyist elements in the Central Committee, Souvarine refused to comply with the decision of the Party. When he was dismissed as editor of the *Bulletin Communiste* he appealed to the Party members to help in publishing a new paper in which the 'truth could be told'. When Souvarine appeared before the Fifth World Congress in his own defence, he spoke in a highly deprecatory manner and announced:

> In this atmosphere of one hundred per cent servile loyalty, I decline to speak and reserve the fundamental right to oppose the Comintern in any way I choose, if I consider it necessary.

Zinoviev opposed him sharply. In his Report to the Fifth World Congress Zinoviev said:

> When at the inauguration of the Labour Government in England Comrade Rosmer, in the name of the Russian party, wrote that the English Labour Government would bring peace to the world, then that was an expression of pacifist democratic illusion whose mouthpiece Rosmer has unfortunately become. We have a right-wing in the French Party. It is fortunately not large numerically. I also believe that it will not be very long-lived either. . . . The executive will do its part in not allowing such a 'right-wing' to develop, which only represents such individual comrades as Comrade Souvarine and Comrade Rosmer.

Radek, who was then wandering in the darkness of Brandlerism, supported Souvarine.[16] The German ultra-leftists, under the leadership of Ruth Fischer, joined Treint, who was then an anti-Trotskyist, and supported his battle against the Trotskyism of Souvarine and the rightist deviation of Rosmer. How the power-grouping has changed since then! Political collapse and opportunism have led to strange bedfellowships. Today the rightist elements that Zinoviev then opposed are his allies.

Souvarine was expelled from the Comintern in July 1924, Rosmer and Monatte in December as a result of their refusal to end any communication with Souvarine who continued his villainous falsehoods and defamation campaign against the KPdSU and the Comintern. Unable to understand Leninism, Souvarine, Rosmer and Monatte deviated to the right even at the time of their party membership. Together with the social-democratic deserters and ex-communists such as Newbold, Phillip Price etc., Souvarine represented the belief that capitalism had consolidated itself and was headed towards a new evolutionary era. Rosmer and Souvarine welcomed the inauguration of the Macdonald Government. In an Open Letter to the British Labour Government they wrote: 'The victory of the Labour Party strengthens the spirit of democracy and freedom.' Zinoviev compared this declaration with a talk by the German social democrat Lobe and judged it correctly as a reformist, democratic, pacifist illusion.

Rosmer and Monatte do not recognize Leninism

After their expulsion, Rosmer, Monatte and Delagarde wrote a letter to the Party members in which they drew up an anarcho-syndicalist programme. In a second letter, which was published in the *Revolution Proletarienne* of January 1925, they proclaimed:

> On the following main points we deviate from the so-called left: 1. In the interpretation of the role of the Party; 2. in respect of the perspective of world revolution; 3. in respect of Leninism or that which goes by that name.

They further declared in the same document:

> We were followers of the Communist International. For us there is neither Leninism nor Trotskyism.

This declaration hardly requires a commentary. The same people who three years ago declared demonstratively that no Leninism existed for them are today allies of the 'Leninist' Opposition. As long as they themselves admit that they do not agree with the Leninist interpretation of the proletarian Party, there is no room for them. Such people can only ally themselves with those who, like the Opposition, want to destroy the Leninist proletarian Communist Party. Those who did not believe in the prospect of revolution became of necessity pessimists and turned their backs on the ranks of revolutionaries. Once outside the ranks of the revolution, they must turn against it as there is no neutrality in class struggle. For these people the Communist International was a strange mixture of communists, Trotskyites, anarchists, syndicalists and all kinds of other types, loosely tied together under the personality of Lenin. Even though they were anarcho-syndicalists, they subjugated themselves to the personality of Lenin; but they were incapable of understanding Lenin's teachings. They stand 'frightened of Leninism without Lenin'. They do not know even the basic tenets of Marxism, because they obviously are as frightened by Marxism without Marx. Therefore they remained unchangeable anarcho-syndicalists, even after they had joined the Communist International. They view Leninism as a dogma, which came into being after Lenin's death and 'under whose banner the might of the International crumbled and its spiritual impetus stagnated'. (Second Letter to the Party membership in January 1925).

The ally of 'the Leninist Opposition', Souvarine, led an unprecedented lie and slander campaign against the KPdSU. He had the impudence to equate the Lenin Mausoleum with the grave of Tamerlane.

The social-democratic nature of the Souvarine–Rosmer group also showed itself on the occasion of the war in Morocco. They criticized the policy of the Communist International toward the rebelling Rif inhabitants.[17] They opposed the 24-hour general strike and the call to the French troops to join with the insurgent Rif Kabyles. They put forward the theory that the proletariat 'could only support a revolutionary movement in the colonies'. They failed to recognize that every anti-imperialist movement has an objectively revolutionary character. The armed insurrection of an entire people, who wish to rid themselves of the imperialist yoke, does not deserve the support and the sympathy of the proletariat—this was the position of the Souvarine–Rosmer group. The socialist democratic theory of 'the civilizing task' of imperialism is not far removed from this interpretation of the colonial question.

Monatte joins forces with Jouhaux

The Sixth Enlarged Plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International distinguished between three categories within the French Opposition: 1. lower middle class intellectualism, represented by Souvarine; 2. the pure social-democratic orientation of Loriot; and 3. anarcho-syndicalism, represented by Rosmer and Monatte. Even while he was a member of the Party and held a leading position there, Monatte opposed the bolshevization of the Party. He opposed the organization of factory cells and insisted that trade union councils alone could fulfil the task. At the last Congress of the CGT (Confederation Generale du Travail) Monatte recommended the amalgamation of the two organizations, but regretted that the climate was not favourable for a discussion of the question of amalgamation with Jouhaux.[18] He stated that the CGT and the CGTU (Confederation Generale du Travail Unitaire) equally opposed a 'rectifying' of the 'wrong' of 1921 (the split). With a gesture of Wilsonian liberalism he recommended a 'unification without winners or losers'. He held out the olive branch to Jouhaux and declared that as the split had originated at the top, the unification also had to come from the top. What Monatte suggested was no association but capitulation to Jouhaux. Monatte was the only representative of his ex-communist group who could appear at the Congress of reformists. He had to represent the whole group.

On the Chinese question, the Rosmer–Monatte group took a very rightist-orientated Menshevik position. They ridiculed the resolution about China which the 7th Enlarged Plenary session of the ECCI had adopted, because it recognized the perspective of non-capitalist development. Apparently they are of the opinion that the victory of the Chinese revolution will create the conditions for the capitalist development of the country; in their view, the Chinese revolution is a middle class revolution *par excellence*. Despite this they support the Opposition!

Souvarine adopts a counter-revolutionary Menshevik position in the *Bulletin Communiste* in relation to the danger of war. He maintains that the danger of war does not exist in reality; that it is a figment of Moscow propaganda. The *Revolution Proletarienne* of the Rosmer–Monatte group supports this anarchistic and Menshevik anti-Soviet campaign in that it publishes the article about the 'suppression of the Workers' Opposition' in the USSR.[19]

Treint joins Trotsky

Now for the ultra-left allies of the Opposition in France. Since they have lost their leading position in the Party as a result of their leftist deviation, Suzanne Girault and Treint oppose the line of the ECCI. Girault, who formerly fought Trotskyism in the French party, has developed Trotskyite deviation. For a long time Treint took an ambiguous centralist stand. Finally, he openly agreed with the Trotskyite platform of the Opposition. The former ultra-leftist anti-Trotskyist Treint joined with the ultra-right Souvarine, Rosmer, and Monatte under the banner of the Opposition!

At the last provincial party conference of the French Party (St. Denis) Treint took a centralist stand. Apparently he wanted to present an appearance of 'impartiality' at the meeting. But this was a cheap trick. His aim was to prepare a favourable climate for his campaign against the KPdSU and the Comintern which he planned in common with the Moscow Opposition. If he had appeared at the conference as openly partisan to the Opposition he would have been totally finished. His own past would have worked against him. He would have been exposed as a political adventurer. But the trick did not succeed. Treint is thoroughly discredited, because of his former activity, before the Party and before the French proletariat. The conference did not believe in his 'impartiality'. Thus he threw off the mask immediately thereafter and came out with the statement that he was in total agreement with the Opposition. This declaration was a written piece that he had apparently brought from Moscow and had in his pocket while he appeared in front of the conference in the role of an impartial judge. Between the conference and the publication of his declaration, nothing occurred that could have enlightened Treint or have led him to the paradise of the Opposition. The 'facts', contentions and accusations which his declaration comprises are all old, and the way in which he trots them out is long familiar to us. They had been represented in exactly this way formerly by the Opposition in Russia. Treint learnt everything from Trotsky in Moscow. The whole of his exposition is derived from the legal and illegal documents of the Opposition. Treint's method of declaring himself as a supporter of the Opposition is that of creating factions. His declaration is an act of splitting the party. The 'opportunistic facts' and acts with which Treint accuses the 'Stalin–Bukharin group' had all taken place before the provincial party conference of the French party; but at the conference Treint did not judge them so harshly. Directly after the conference he published his declaration which he allowed to circulate among the party members and even in the trade unions, without asking the central committee.

The Chinese question takes up a prominent position in Treint's declaration of faith. He accuses the Comintern of playing the politics of opportunism in China, of having betrayed the Chinese revolution. But leading French Comrades have asserted in their reply to Treint's declaration that

> he [Treint] was formerly totally in agreement with the 'anti-marxist' politics of the Comintern. In common with the majority of the party, he agreed with all resolutions and theories of the Communist International including those on the Chinese question.

At the last Plenum of the ECCI he expressed certain reservations. Nevertheless he was in agreement with the majority against all viewpoints of the Opposition.

In his declaration Treint serves up a few presumptuous lies in connection with the Chinese question. For example, he maintains that the 'Stalin–Bukharin group provided political weapons against the agrarian revolution', and that they 'played an illicit, double-faced game'. On what does he base this abject lie? On more lies. It is to be noted that even though the resolution of the last Plenum of the ECCI came out in favour of an agrarian revolution, the 'small China Commission' to which Treint and Ercoli belonged, sent guidelines to China in which restraint of the agrarian revolution was recommended. As a former representative of the Comintern in China who received these guidelines, I declare emphatically that Treint is telling shameless lies. In contrast to Treint's construction of lies the essential point of the ECCI's recommendations was to work vigorously for the agrarian revolution. Treint repeats only what Trotsky and Zinoviev say about the Chinese question.[20] He ends by declaring that 'the hands of the Comintern are stained with the blood of the Chinese and Viennese workers'.

Treint takes recourse to hysterical and sensational announcements in order to excite the easily excitable French proletariat. He proclaims:

> The crisis is growing within the Russian Party and is spreading to the International. The fate of the Russian revolution, yes of the whole world revolution, is at stake.

Treint raises this false alarm now when the Opposition in the KPdSU is politically bankrupt, totally isolated from the masses and thoroughly beaten in the Party, and has taken refuge in illegal dealings in order to destroy the Party.

A feature of Treint's declaration is that it not only repeats the Opposition platform, but it also contains details which only the leaders of the Opposition, who are still today members of the Central Committee and KPdSU, could cite. Treint makes (totally unfounded) attacks on the 'inner regime' of the Comintern and of the KPdSU, attacks which will be a useful aid to the social democrats and to the bourgeoisie in their crusade against the USSR.

Treint erects the 'horror-spectre' of 'Stalinism' the better to cloak his own capitulation to Trotskyism. In view of his political past, solidarity with the political platform of Trotskyism will discredit him utterly. In order to prevent this he attempts a few misleading manoeuvres. He declares:

> Formerly the International fought Trotskyism. It will do so again should Trotskyism once more seek to rejuvenate itself. But there is no danger of this at present. The fact that Comrade Trotsky took a Leninist stand on the Chinese question allows us to hope that Trotskyism will no longer rear its head.

Treint thus makes Trotskyism his own under the paltry pretext of it being no longer a threat. It really is no longer a threat. Its international allies discredited it totally and sealed its bankruptcy.

The Dutch anarcho-syndicalists join the Opposition

A short time ago the Opposition found an ally in Holland. It is the anarcho-syndicalist 'National Arbeids Sekretariaat' (NAS) under the leadership of the 'leftist communist' Sneevliet, who became known for his not so rare opportunistic deviations.[21] Apropos of the Conference which broke up the fighting union of the NAS with the Communist Party of Holland in November 1924, Sneevliet declared while replying to Zinoviev:

> Just as in England communism will not enter through the door of MacManus, so it will not enter through the Communist Party in Holland, but through NAS, which will be the leading communist organization.

In 1923 the NAS had split over the question of affiliation with the Profintern. 14000 of the 23000 members agreed to affiliation. The Communist Sneevliet was elected chairman of NAS. Instead of continuing propaganda for communism within NAS, Sneevliet made concessions to anarcho-syndicalist viewpoints. Instead of building up a communist faction within the NAS he built a NAS faction within the Communist Party of Holland. The rightist politics of Wynkoop supported the 'ultra-leftist' politics of Sneevliet, who agreed with the line of the German 'ultra-leftist' Schumacher. Sneevliet was a stubborn opponent of the united front and supported the German ultra-leftist policy of isolation. While Sneevliet published the NAS organ, *De Arbeid*, this paper opposed in its articles faction work within reformist trade unions and advised the revolutionary elements to break with such unions. The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Comintern Executive condemned the politics of Sneevliet and Bowman who were the leaders of NAS. When the resolution of the Seventh Plenum reached Holland, Sneevliet wrote that even though Wynkoop had been expelled, the Communist Party of Holland would remain under the influence of Wynkoop. The NAS refused to accept the resolution of the Comintern and declared war on the Communist Party. At the elections the NAS put up its own candidates against those of the Communist Party. Dozens of communists were expelled from the NAS which passed a resolution that no member of the Communist Party of Holland could be a functionary of the NAS. Thus the NAS rivalled the English Labour Party in its hate against the communists.

Under the leadership of the German ultra-leftists Sneevliet turned NAS toward anarcho-syndicalist and counter-revolutionary sectarianism. This is what made it declare its solidarity with the Opposition in the KPdSU. The speeches of Zinoviev and Trotsky on the Anglo-Russian (trade union unity) Committee were published and widely distributed as a pamphlet. NAS invited a representative of the

Maslow–Fischer group to come to Holland to speak about 'how the Comintern has destroyed the revolutionary German trade unions'.

The de Kat group which was expelled from the Communist Party of Holland in 1923, stood with both feet on Trotsky's platform. Now de Kat put forward the theory that there was no prospect for a world revolution in the near future; therefore the communists should return to the social democratic parties in order to await better times. Henriette Roland-Holst, like all intellectual dilettantes, looked on Trotskyism with sympathy. She went along with the de Kat group; then she returned to the Party, and finally openly expressed her sympathy for the Opposition. Around the same time she wrote to Fenner Brockway and supported his proposition to amalgamate the Second and Third Internationals under the conditions which the British Independent Labour Party (ILP) had suggested. The nature of these conditions requires renunciation of Leninism by the Comintern. Thus the proposition to liquidate the Communist International comes from the followers of the Opposition. The pessimistic, defeatist, and by nature social democratic theories of the Opposition can only appeal to people who are objectively in favour of the liquidation of the Comintern and revision of Leninism in favour of the counter-revolution.

These are thus the international allies of the Opposition. The expulsion of these 'revolutionary leftist elements' is quoted by the Opposition as proof of the rightist deviation of the Comintern. With the sympathy and support of these counter-revolutionary and unscrupulous intellectuals, political adventurers, shiftless anarcho-syndicalists and turncoats to social democratic reformism, the Opposition expects to appear at the 15th party Congress of the KPdSU. With such compromised weapons it attempts to fight the Comintern and to replace the Leninist Party of proletarian dictatorship. It will not succeed.

Notes

[1] Lev Davidovich Trotsky (original name Bronstein) and Grigorii Evgenevich Zinoviev (original name Radomylsky) were old rivals in the post-revolutionary Bolshevik hierarchy. Founder of the Red Army, Trotsky saw himself as second only to Lenin. On the other hand, Zinoviev had been Lenin's protégé, and as Founder-President of the Communist International he occupied a very prestigious and influential position. Zinoviev constituted the Triumvirate with Lev Borisovich Kamenev (original name Rozenfeld) and Josif Vissarionovich Stalin (original name Djugashvili) to prevent Trotsky from acquiring Lenin's mantle. However, after Lenin's death Stalin sought to destroy not only Trotsky but also other members of the Bolshevik Old Guard. Threatened with political isolation and extinction by Stalin's unscrupulous manoeuvres, Trotsky and Zinoviev joined forces in April 1926 and formed the 'United Opposition'. Stalin got Zinoviev dismissed from the post of the Comintern President on 22 November 1926 (he had been already removed from the Politbureau of the CPSU on 23 July 1926). Trotsky was dismissed from the Comintern

Executive on 27 September 1927, and both Zinoviev and Trotsky were expelled first from the Central Committee (October) and then from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (November). These decisions were ratified by the Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU (2–19 December 1927) which was totally dominated by Stalin, and which expelled 75 leading members of the CPSU.

For sources, *Inprecor* and *Communist International; Protokolls* of the Comintern Congresses; the Trotsky Archives in the Harvard University's Library.

[2] An Opposition Platform, drafted by Trotsky and signed by 13 Opposition leaders, was addressed in September 1927 to the Politbureau and the Central Committee with the request that it should be printed and circulated in advance of the Fifteenth Party Congress. Knowing that the request would not be granted, the Opposition got the Platform printed (an English Version is included in L. Trotsky, *The Real Situation in Russia*, tr. Max Eastman, n.d.? 1928, pp. 23–195), but the underground press was raided and seized by the OGPU, and the printers arrested. To the time of the 15th Party Congress, however, the Opposition continued to issue a daily bulletin illegally.

E. H. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, Vol. 2, 1976, pp, 36–8; L. Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, 1970, pp. 309–10.

[3] Early in October 1927, Zinoviev, Trotsky and some of their supporters wrote to the CPSU Politbureau demanding a Special Commission to investigate charges against them; they also issued a manifesto to 'all members of the party' asking for the publication of all relevant documents. Subsequently the letter and the manifesto were published in *The New International*, New York, Nov. 1934, pp. 120–24. According to official estimates (N. Popov, *Outline History of the CPSU*, Vol. 2, 1934, p. 323), the Opposition had at this time about 6,000 supporters. The same figure is given in Victor Serge's *Memoires d'un revolutionnaire*, 1951, p. 243.

[4] Menshevik means the minority just as Bolshevik means the majority in Russian. In Communist usage, however, it has become a term of abuse. In 1903 at the Second Congress of the All-Russian Social Democratic Labour Party there occurred a split on several issues led on the one side by Vladimir Ilich Lenin (Ulianov) and on the other by Julii Osipovich Martov (Tsederbaum). Lenin successfully manoeuvred to organize 24 votes in his support against Martov's 20. The total number of votes at the Congress was 51, but 7 delegates who were Martov supporters left the Congress before its sessions were over. The main point of disagreement, which became increasingly pronounced over the years, was the Menshevik rejection of the Leninist concept of a highly centralized party of professional revolutionaries and its multiple implications.

L. H. Harrison, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism*, Cambridge, Mass, 1955; Donald W. Treadgold, *Lenin and his Rivals* 1898–1906, London, 1955; E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol I, 1973, pp. 38–56; Schapiro, op. cit., pp. 37–54.

[5] Parallels between the French and the Russian revolutions were frequently drawn by the Communist leaders in their theoretical expositions and debates. The French Thermidor (1793) marked the end of the Jacobin regime and prologued the rise of the Bonapartist dictatorship. In Russia after the revolution, 'thermidorianism' came to be equated with appeasement of the peasant. Communist critics of Lenin's New Economic Policy considered NEP to be the Soviet Thermidor. In the summer of 1927 'thermidorianism' became a major issue between the ruling group and the Opposition—the latter claiming to be true Jacobins and attacking the former as thermidorians. On the eve of his suicide in November 1927, Adolf Abramovich Joffe, who had represented the Soviet Union successively in several countries, wrote in despair in a letter to his friend Trotsky about 'the beginning of the thermidorian period of our revolution'.

Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky 1921–1929*, New York, 1959; Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, Vol 2; Schapiro, op. cit.

[6] Arkadi Maslow, Ruth Fischer and Hugo Urbahns were leaders of the Left Wing of the

Communist Party of Germany (KPD). Russian-born Maslow had a strong base in Berlin which he consistently used to oppose Russian intervention in the affairs of the KPD. Austrian-born Ruth Fischer became a Berliner in 1921. At the 9th Congress of the KPD (April 1924) which followed the debacle of the German Revolution (October 1923), the old leadership of Heinrich Brandler–August Thalheimer in the KPD was overthrown by the new Maslow–Fischer team. At the Fifth Comintern Congress (June–July 1924), Ruth Fischer was elected a candidate member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern; she also became a member of the Presidium. However, both Maslow and Fischer were expelled by the KPD Central Committee in August 1926; and the expulsion was ratified by the ECCI at its 7th Plenum (December 1926). H. Urbahns was also expelled at the same time. He was the editor of the Opposition organ *Fahne des Kommunismus*.

Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, Harvard, 1948; Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, Ann Arbor, 1962; E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, Vol. 3, 1972.

[7] Ivan Katz was for some years Permanent Delegate of the KPD to the Comintern Presidium; he was also Communist deputy of Reichstag. Karl Korsch was a distinguished Communist professor who, together with the then KPD leader Heinrich Brandler, became a member of the short-lived Socialist-Communist coalition cabinet in Saxony. He was the author of the quite unorthodox and controversial book *Marxismus und Philosophie* (1923). He, together with Ernst Schwarz, opposed in the Reichstag the German–Soviet Union Treaty of April 1926. All three were expelled from the Party and the expulsion ratified by the ECCI in 1926.

Russian-born Boris Souvarine and his comrade F. Loriot were among the left-wingers of the French Socialist Party who founded the Communist Party of France in 1920. At the Third Comintern Congress (1921) Souvarine was elected to ECCI and the Presidium. He was, for some time, editor of the Party organ, *Bulletin Communiste*. He supported Trotsky, published Trotsky's *Cours Nouveau* in French, and was eventually expelled from the Party and the Comintern. His book, *Staline, Apercu historique du bolchevisme* (Paris, 1935) contains inside information and observations of considerable interest. Loriot criticized the resolutions of the Fifth Comintern Congress, brought out his own periodical *Contre le Courant*, and was expelled from the French CP in January 1926. A. Treint, a teacher by profession, was also one of the Left Socialist founders of the CP of France. He was one of the political secretaries of the French Party in 1923 and was elected a member of the ECCI at the Fifth Comintern Congress (1924). He also became a member of the ECCI secretariat, and during the Eighth Plenum (May 1927) he was, with Bukharin and Togliatti, a member of the Sub-Committee of the Chinese Commission. He was expelled in late 1927.

A. Bordiga was a leader of the Left Wing of the Italian Socialist Party. When the SP refused to accept unconditionally the 21 conditions of admission to the Comintern, he split the SP and formed the Communist Party of Italy (1921). Secretary-General of the PCI, he proved intransigent and became an acute problem to Moscow. Elected to the ECCI at the Fifth Comintern Congress (1924), he refused to take up the post, did not attend the Fifth Plenum (March–April 1925), and continued to criticize the Comintern leadership. At the Sixth Plenum (February 1926) he spoke for four hours opposing the United Front tactics and Moscow domination of the Comintern. He supported Trotsky, was suspended, and then expelled.

Ruth Fischer, op. cit; O. K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, 1948; Arthur Rosenberg, *Die Geschichte des Bolschewismus*, 1932; G. Walter, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Francais*, Paris, 1948; Jane Degras (ed.), *The Communist International Documents Vol II 1923–28*, London, 1971; E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, Vol. 3, esp. Chapts 28, 30, 31; F. Bellini and G. Galli, *Storia del Partito Communisto Italiano*, 1953.

[8] Hans Weber was the leader of the Palatinate ultra-Left group and Paul Kotter led an ultra-Left group in the Wedding, the proletarian suburb of Berlin. Ruth Fischer (op. cit., p. 603) listed ten Communist groups 'in and out of the Party' in Germany in 1927.

The Nationale Arbeider-Secretariat (NAS) represented the influential anarcho-syndicalist movement in Holland. Some of the founders of the Dutch Communist Party, among them Anton Pannekoek, an internationally famous astronomer, and Herman Gorter, poet and writer, soon found Russian dominance of the Comintern unbearable, broke away, and formed the Communist Labour Party of Holland. Gorter wrote an 'Open Letter' in reply to Lenin's *Leftwing Communism*, criticizing the latter for holding the Russian model as universally valid for all revolutionary movements. The Dutch group emphasized the differences between conditions in Russia and in Western Europe and the USA.

Alfred Rosmer and P. Monatte were leaders of the French Syndicalist movement who supported the Russian Revolution, joined the French Communist Party and became leaders of its Left Wing. Rosmer attended the Second Comintern Congress, was elected to the ECCI, and helped in founding the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) or Profintern. Rosmer was also for some time manager of *L'Humanite*. They were expelled from the French CP and the expulsion ratified by the Fifth Congress (1924). They and Souvarine brought out the monthly periodical *La Revolution Proletarienne* (December 1924). Copies of this periodical used to come to M. N. Roy regularly in the late forties. Rosmer wrote *Le Mouvement Ouvrier Pendant La Guerre*, Paris, 1936, and *Moscou sous Lenine*, Paris, 1953.

Franz Borkenau, op. cit.; Jane Degras, op. cit.; Fischer, op. cit.; Walter, op. cit.; V. Serge, *Memoires d'un Revolutionnaire*, Paris, 1951; Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, Vol. 3.

[9] The 'Theses on the Current Questions of the International Communist Movement' passed by the Sixth ECCI Plenum (February–March 1926) explained the phenomenon of 'relative capitalist stabilization', emphasized the importance of united front tactics, and asked 'all Communists to be prepared, in the interests of unity, to see the RILU cease to exist as a separate body'. The implications were explained by Zinoviev, and the Comintern economist Eugen Varga.

Inprekorr VI, 68; *Protokoll: Erweiterte Exekutive der KI, 17 Feb–15 Marz, 1926*, Hamburg (n.d.). 'Temporary stabilization' had already been admitted by the Fifth Plenum (March–April 1925) of ECCI.

[10] The text of the ECCI's Open Letter was published in the *Rote Fahne* of 1 September 1925, and in *Inprekorr*, V, 128.

[11] . Zinoviev 'invented', or was the first publicly to use, the word ' "Trotskyism" as a term of abuse'. E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, Vol. I, 1970, p. 170. Besides the theory of Permanent Revolution, another particular feature of Trotskyism under official attack was Trotsky's contemptuous view of the peasantry and his distrust of the worker–peasant bloc.

[12] The Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) was founded in March 1916 after a split in the SPD. The USPD, in turn, split in October 1920, and the majority decided to join the Comintern and unite with the Spartakusbund to form the United Communist Party of Germany. The minority returned to the SPD in September 1922.

From the foundation of the Comintern the Scandinavian delegates opposed Russian domination and demanded a non-centralist and federal type of international. The Norwegian Labour Party joined the Comintern without changing its name. In November 1923 the Central Committee of the Norwegian Labour Party called a special Congress where the majority disowned the Comintern and the minority constituted the Communist Party of Norway.

[13] Maslow, released from prison in Germany in July 1926, refused to go to Moscow where he feared he would be interned. Fischer returned at about the same time from Moscow to Berlin without Comintern permission. They were expelled together with Urbahns, Scholem and Schwan.

[14] Alexei Ivanovich Rykov was a member of the Politbureau of the Party since 1922 and succeeded Lenin as Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars; he was also President

of Sovnarkom. A supporter of NEP he joined Bukharin and Tomsky in 1928–9 as a leader of the Right Opposition. Removed from his posts and expelled, he was re-admitted in 1931, served as a commissar from 1931–6, was expelled again in 1937 and became a victim of the Purge in 1938.

E. Yaroslavsky was Stalin's trusted man who taught at the Institute of Red Professors, was put on the editorial board of *Pravda* and the *Bolshevik* to check Bukharin, and wrote *The History of the All-Union Communist Party* (Bolsheviks) in several volumes, Moscow, 1926–30. He was also the author of *The Meaning of Moscow Trials*, New York, 1938, justifying the trials.

[15] A declaration signed by Lev Mikhailovich Karakhan, Assistant People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, dated 25 July 1919 and sent to the Chinese Governments at Peking and at Canton, categorically stated that 'the Soviet Government returns to the Chinese people without demanding any kind of compensation the Chinese Eastern Railway . . . seized from them by the government of the Tsars . . . . .' However, there were many complications, and although an 'Agreement for the Provisional Management of the Chinese Eastern Railway' was signed between Soviet Russia and the Government at Peking on 31 May 1924, and another between Soviet Russia and Marshal Chang Tso-lin's Government in Mukden on 20 September 1924, the differences continued to prove intractable.

A. K. Wu, *China and the Soviet Union*, 1950; R. T. Pollard, *China's Foreign Relations, 1917–1931*, 1933; Jane Degras, *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, 2 vols, 1951–2; Xenia J. Eudin and Robert C. North, *Soviet Russia and the East 1920–1927*, 1957.

[16] Karl Radek (originally Karl Bernardovich Sobelsohn) was born in Lvov, Galicia (Austrian Poland), but moved in his youth to Germany where he joined the Social Democratic Party and later the Spartakusbund. He became a member of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, but being a non-Russian who did not possess a Bolshevik background, he remained always a bit of an outsider. A member of the ECCI and the Presidium till 1923, he was severely criticized by Zinoviev at the Fifth Comintern Congress (1924). He had considerable influence on the German Communist Party where he strongly backed Heinrich Brandler and advocated a United Front from above with the SPD. He was removed from his political base in Berlin, and from 1925 to 1927 was Rector of Sun Yat-sen University at Moscow. He joined the Trotsky–Zinoviev Opposition in 1926, was expelled from the RCP in 1927 and sent into exile. In 1929 he capitulated to Stalin and served as a foreign specialist till 1937 when he was framed in the Second Moscow Trial and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. His final fate is not known, but like Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rykov and several others he had also been posthumously rehabilitated under Gorbachev's new policy.

Heinrich Brandler, born in Warnsdorf, Bohemia, joined the SPD at the age of 16 but was expelled from the party for his close and active association with the Spartacist group of Rosa Luxemburg. Sentenced to five years' imprisonment, he escaped to Russia in 1921, returned to Germany after the amnesty, and became the acknowledged leader of the KPD. He joined the short-lived coalition government in Saxony in 1923, but after the failure of the German uprising he was blamed and removed to Moscow where he was allowed to work as a member of the Russian Communist Party. He did not agree with the new Soviet-Comintern policy, and returned to his political base in Germany in 1928 without Moscow's permission. Expelled in January 1929 he organized the Communist Opposition in Germany and published its principal organ, *Gegen den Strom*. In 1933 he migrated to France, and from there to Cuba in 1941. He was allowed to return to Germany in 1949 when he became active in the *Arbeiter-Politik* group. He died in September 1967.

Karl Radek, *Portraits and Pamphlets*, London, 1935; Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus*; Ruth Fischer, op. cit.; Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, Vol. 3; personal interviews with Ruth Fischer and Claire Thalheimer.

[17] On 8 June 1925 the Eastern Bureau of the ECCI had issued a Manifesto severely attacking the French government for its was on Abd-el-Karim's Rif forces in Morocco. During 1924 the Rifis had successfully fought against Spain in Spanish Morocco. In April 1925 fighting started between the Rifis and the French in French Morocco. The Rifis were fighting for an independent Rif republic, free of both Spain and France, but in May 1926 Abd-el-Karim surrendered to the combined forces of France and Spain. For the Manifesto, *Inprekorr*, 12 June 1925.

[18] Leon Jouhaux was the leader of the CGT (General Confederation of Labour in France) who wanted the French trade union movement to develop along the lines of other trade unionist movements in West Europe. The founding of the Red International of Labour Unions caused a split in the CGT. Jouhaux prohibited the formation of revolutionary committees in trade unions and expelled the dissidents who formed the CGTU.

[19] At the eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (March 1919), centralization of power within the Party and of the Party on all spheres of life in the Soviet Union was fully explicated and sought to be enforced. Three new organs were created—the Politburo, the Orgburo and the Secretariat. The process was resisted by many party members, the most important group calling itself the Workers' Opposition. The group opposed growing centralization of economic and political controls, advocated transfer of the control of industry and production from the State to the trade unions, and demanded open election to all party posts and free discussion within the Party. Its leaders were Alexandra M. Kollontai, a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee and for some time People's Commissar for Social Welfare, one of the very few women to reach a top position in the Bolshevik Party, and Alexander G. Shlyapnikov, People's Commissar of Labour in the first Soviet Government. The group was very active from the autumn of 1920, but was temporarily crushed at the tenth Congress of the RCP (March 1921). It had a revival in 1923, and although outlawed, continued to be quite active in 1926–7 when it backed Trotsky against Stalin. However, Kollontai was cut off from her political base by being sent as Soviet Ambassador first to Norway and then to Mexico. She later submitted and in 1933 received the Order of Lenin. Shlyapnikov was sent to the Paris embassy; later appointed President of the Metal Import Board in Moscow. He disappeared at the time of the 1930 Purge.

A. Kollontai, *Die Plattform der Arbeiteropposition*, Berlin, 1921; Ruth Fischer, op. cit.; E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol I.

[20] Bukharin, Treint and Togliatti constituted the sub-Committee of the Chinese Commission at the eighth ECCI Plenum (May 1927). Treint disagreed with Bukharin but did not oppose the resolution on the Chinese Question which was introduced by Bukharin. Trotsky spoke against Bukharin and supported Zinoviev (who was not allowed to attend the Plenum).

[21] Hendricus Josephus Franciscus Marie Sneevliet (Maring) went to Java in 1913 where he founded the Indies Social Democratic Association and was instrumental in organizing the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1920. He attended the Second Congress of the Comintern and was sent to China in 1921. In 1922 he was a member of the Profintern's Presidium, and in 1923 Comintern's representative in Holland. He later broke with the Comintern and headed a Left-Wing Socialist group in Holland. Roy and Sneevliet became close friends in 1920, and their friendship survived subsequent political differences. He was killed by the Nazis during World War II.

Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East 1920–27*; M. N. Roy, *Memoirs*, 1964; Ruth T. Mcvey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, Ithaca, 1965. SNR.

‘Assembly Letter’

Introductory editorial note

This letter dated 30 December 1927 was written in Moscow and sent to the Foreign Bureau of the Communist Party of India in Paris to be despatched by hand and 'delivered personally to Muzaffar Ahmad, 2/1 European Asylum Lane, Calcutta.' However, the arrangements for sending out clandestinely such documents and instructions which had been made by Roy's principal assistant in Paris, Muhammad Ali Sepassi, did not work on this occasion. A cabin steward in steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company, Md Abdul Hakim, had been given the letter enclosed in a large envelope, and instructed to hand it over personally to Muzaffar Ahmad. Hakim did reach Calcutta but forgot to deliver the letter; instead, on his way back to England, he mailed it from Aden on 16 May 1928 to Ahmad's address. The letter was intercepted by the Intelligence Bureau, and was deliberately leaked by the Government to the press. It was published in *The Statesman* (Calcutta) on 18 August 1928, and passages from it in *The Times* (London) on 26 August. The letter was read out and tabled in the Central Legislative Assembly on 10 September 1928 and thus came to be generally known as the 'Assembly Letter'.

The then Home Member J. F. Crerar used the 'Assembly Letter' to justify the introduction of the Public Safety (Removal from India) Bill which was intended to enable the Government of India to deport from the country such communist agents from Britain as George Allison alias Donald Campbell, Philip Spratt and Benjamin Bradley. The Bill was hotly debated and strongly opposed by the Swarajist members of the Assembly, and on 24 September 1928 it was ruled *ultra vires* by Vithalbhai Patel, President of the Assembly. An amended version of the Bill was also rejected by the Assembly; it had consequently to be enacted by ordinance.

The letter which was tabled in the Assembly and subsequently included as a prosecution exhibit in the Meerut Conspiracy Case (Meerut Record P. 377) did not carry any signature. It was addressed to the Central Committees of the Communist Party of India and the Workers' and Peasants' Party. According to *The Statesman, The Times* and the Home Member, the author of the letter was M. N. Roy. However, upon publication of extracts from the letter in *The Times*, Roy himself wrote a letter on 29 August (published in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 September 1928) that he had not 'addressed any such letter to anybody in India'. Statements were issued by the CPI and the WPP describing the 'fake Roy letter' as 'an invention of the imperialist press'. In the Assembly debates, some Swarajist members disputed its authenticity, and argued that the letter had been devised by the government to justify the Public Safety Bill.

Despite Roy's repudiation of its authorship at that time, there is no doubt that the letter was indeed written by him. This was convincingly established by the prosecution at the time of the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Muzaffar Ahmad and Gangadhar Adhikari, representing at a much later date the two rival Communist Parties of India, affirmed in their published writings that Roy was the author of the 'Assembly Letter'. I was also assured of Roy's authorship of the letter by Philip Spratt and Tayab Sheikh. Its argument and style as well as allusions and references to specific events and issues make it quite evident that the writer could have been none but M. N. Roy.

The letter was written nearly four months after Roy's return from China. He was still a member of the Comintern Executive (ECCI) and his views carried the authority of that body. In the letter Roy clearly spelled out the nature of the distinction between the Communist Party and the Workers' and Peasant's Party and the way in which the latter should be developed, controlled and utilized by the former. He also stressed the urgency of the CPI formally seeking affiliation to the Comintern. Finally, he underlined the need for proper coordination of the activities of the Party in India and its emigrant section in Europe.

There are also indications in the letter that, taking advantage of Roy's absence from Moscow during the first eight months of 1927, several people were trying to undermine his position. Among them were S. D. Saklatvala, Communist M.P., who visited India in 1927, and Saumyendranath Tagore, a grandnephew of Rabindranath, who reached Moscow in June 1927, and, in the words of Muzaffar Ahmad, 'concocted some sort of a report and placed it before the Communist International' (Muzaffar Ahmad, *The CPI and its Formation Abroad*, 1962, p. 165). Saumyendranath would be quite vocal at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, but his political ambition was not matched by intellectual or organizational competence, and he left no mark on the CPI or the Comintern.

The text of the 'Assembly Letter' reproduced here constituted an exhibit in the Meerut Conspiracy Case Record, and is to be found in the National Archives of India, Home/Pol. F 190/28. SNR.

'Assembly Letter' To the CCs of the CPI & WPP[1]

Dear Comrades,

During this year, while I was away, several letters from individual comrades came. They contained a number of serious questions concerning the situation at home. The comrades, who were in charge of things in my absence, provisionally answered to those questions.[2] On my return I carefully read all the letters, reports, and other valuable materials. I did not write any earlier immediately on my return, because I wanted to get intimately acquainted with the state of affairs before expressing my considered opinion.[3] Besides, some of the questions being of a serious political nature demanded mature consideration and consultation with other comrades. Now I am in a position to write to you on all the questions raised.

As introduction I desire to make certain things clear. This is particularly in reference to remarks made in the letters of Edward written in January and August.[4] I can understand his bitterness; but the personal tone is deplorable. Such tone would only justify the charge 'bolshevik agent' made by our enemies. Edward puts the question as if the comrades at home were charged by us abroad with some work the accomplishment of which would benefit or even aggrandize us: and that our failure to respect some moral contract, tacitly made, landed the comrades at home in endless difficulties. Starting from this erroneous conception of our relation, Edward makes the astounding statement that 'unless you mean business seriously, we are not going to be exploited by you as hitherto'. We 'mean business' as seriously as anybody, but there seems to be some difference as regards the nature of the business. I take it that the difficulty of the situation overcame Edward, making him say such things. Nevertheless things must be spoken out; any possible misunderstanding must be removed if we are to work together as we all desire and must. Therefore let me begin with a few words as regards our relation and the basis of collective work.

Our relation is that of comrades agreeing on the principles and programme of a revolutionary struggle for freedom. This agreement leads us into one party. Our collective task, therefore, is to organize a party that will lead the struggle for the realization of the principles and programme we all subscribe to. This task has not been imposed upon us by anybody from outside. It arises out of the conditions in India. The Indian workers and peasants must struggle for freedom, must have their political organ to lead this struggle, irrespective of any help or stimulation from abroad. Indian working class movement must have international affiliation because a revolutionary struggle against capitalism cannot be conducted successfully in national isolation. International solidarity, which is expressed in organizational relations, is a political necessity. Any other benefits resulting from it are secondary. The International can help the Indian working class only when they help themselves; and this the Indian working class are doing admirably. As the conditions inside India demand the growth of a working class party, everything required for this purpose should be available mainly and essentially inside the country. Any aid from outside can be only supplementary. Otherwise the party will be an exotic affair without any organic relation with the situation it must operate upon. So, you in India are not doing a job set to you by us abroad; both you and ourselves feel the necessity for a working class party, and are contributing our respective quotas in founding and building it up.

Now let us proceed to the subject matter of this communication. The subjects to be dealt with are: (1) Organization of the parties (CP & WPP, their relation etc.); (2) international affiliation; and (3) coordination of the activities of the party in the country and its emigrant section.

1. There seems to have been some confusion about the existence of two parties. Some comrades at home appear to think that the formation of the WPP means the liquidation of the CP. It is not true. We do not propose the liquidation of the CP. On the contrary, we are of the opinion, and this opinion is supported by the International, that in the period of history the working class can fight for freedom only under the leadership of the CP. Even the national revolution in its last stages will not have any other loyal and resolute leader than the CP. This has been proved by the experience in China.[5] A real struggle against capitalism can be conducted to the final victory only by a party which is guided by the revolutionary principles of Marxism and Leninism; and such a party is the CP. Imperialism being the most highly developed form of capitalism, national revolution in the colonies is essentially a struggle against capitalism. Therefore the driving force of the national revolution must be the proletariat under the leadership of the CP. Having this view of the situation, since 1920 we have worked for the organization of the CP in India, and the International has supported this effort of ours. So on the question of the necessity of the CP there is no difference. The difference appears to be in the method of forming the CP. Some comrades at home seem to believe

in the possibility of organizing the CP legally. We do not share this belief. The experience of the last seven years substantiates our opinion. We do not propose self-liquidation; but are opposed to legalist deviation which will render the CP a harmless nominal entity unworthy of repression.

In this connection I must refer to the letter of Edward which contains dangerous views as regards the organization of the CP. I take it that Edward represents the opinion of a group of comrades. He maintains that *The Masses* (in its articles exposing Satyabhakta's 'CP') was not correct in saying that the accused in the Kanpur case were sentenced as communists. In Edward's opinion they were condemned as communists, but for making preparations to 'wage war against the king'.[6] The conclusion of this argument is obvious: A CP can exist legally in India if it abstains from the preparations to 'wage war against the king'. That is, legality can be had at the expense of the very *raison d'être* of the CP. Is not it too dear a price to pay? The advocates of legalism base their argument on the famous statement of the prosecution counsel in the Kanpur case: 'The Government has nothing against communism as such.' But this very statement strengthens our case. The government has nothing against communism as such but will not tolerate its least application to practice. This was borne out by the Kanpur case, Satyabhakta's show and our legal CP. In the Kanpur case our comrades were convicted because they were alleged to have tried to apply communism to the Indian situation. There was no evidence to prove that they otherwise tried to wage war against the king. Satya's show was tolerated and patronized, from behind the scene, because in addition to other pernicious purposes, it served the purposes of creating the atmosphere of 'legal communism'. Finally, our CP is ignored because of its remarkable inactivity. The moment it proposed to have even a conference it attracted the attention of the police. A communist party is not formed by a number of individuals declaring themselves communists. It is done in actions first for the propagation of communist principles and programme among the masses, then organizing those subscribing to those principles and programme in the fight for the realization of those principles and programme and then again leading the entire working class in every stage and form of the struggle leading up to, and creating conditions for the overthrow of capitalism and establishment of socialism. The proletariat and peasantry will not follow the communist vanguard, will not have confidence in them, will not outgrow the influence of the bourgeois and reformist leaders, unless the communist vanguard can place themselves at the head of everyday struggle of the workers and peasants, support their immediate demands, show them in actual struggle that the realization of the smallest demands of working class is closely connected with the broad issues of national and class struggle. The communists will become the trusted leaders of the masses by giving concrete form to the latter's unconscious demands. In the earlier stages of the class struggle the workers and peasants do not know clearly what they want. The struggle for the freedom of the working class cannot be postponed till every worker has acquired class consciousness, which can be developed only in actual struggle. The majority of the peasants do not know the reason of their misery. The communist must go to them and explain to them how they are exploited, tell them what they want to liberate themselves from in the present condition and lead them in the struggle for the realization of their requirements. He must place before the peasant the slogans: abolition of landlordism, reduction of rent and taxes, annulment of agricultural indebtedness, etc. Then the peasantry will enthusiastically enter the struggle knowing what they are fighting for and will follow the communist as their leader. Similarly in the towns the communist must place before the proletariat a programme of action corresponding to their immediate demands and tell them that their role is to overthrow capitalism. In India the communists must place the question of national independence as the precondition for the realization of the minimum demands of the working class and lead it in the fight for national freedom as a step towards the realization of socialism.

Can these be done without incurring the wrath, not only of the imperialist rulers, but also of the native bourgeoisie? No. Before the communists have taken two steps in this direction of organizing their party, the narrow limit of 'communism as such' will be exceeded, and they will find themselves 'waging war against the king'. If they do not act in this direction, they will never organize the struggle against capitalism and will never realize socialism.

With these considerations we do not share the illusion that a CP can be organized in India legally. But as mentioned above, we are not in favour of self-liquidation. Fight for legal existence but build up a powerful underground organization. Preserve your legality as long as you can, but don't have it at the expense of activities essential for the growth of the party. The existence of the CP should be known, every worker and peasant must know it, but don't emasculate the party with the banal and cowardly doctrine of bourgeois nationalism that all our activities are overboard, we have nothing to hide. Every little act of a real communist is a blow to imperialism, and imperialism knows it; therefore if the communist does not act illegally, he must pass his life in prison. There is no 'fair play', no gentlemanliness in the revolutionary struggle.

How to organize an illegal party? I am afraid that the failure to answer this question contributes to the dangerous legalist deviation. Political party is a comparatively new thing in India; and there prevails a rather faulty idea about it. An illegal organization is traditionally associated with terrorist conspiracy, bombs and revolvers. It is not understood how a party can be illegal and carry on political activities. It is thought that if the CP is illegal its very name should not be known to anybody. A political party is confounded with secret conspiracy. Forced underground, the CP will not make a secret of its existence. Not in the least. On the contrary, through literature, journals, manifestos, declarations, appeals on every event touching the life of the workers and peasants, printed and circulated conspiratorially, the existence of the CP will be made known to every worker and peasant. The programme of the party will be published. Members will be recruited. Central and local organizational conferences of the party will be held whenever necessary. Every member of the party will actively and openly participate in labour and peasant movement, also in the revolutionary nationalist struggle, as a communist, under the guidance of the party, according to the programme of the party; only it will not be publicly known that he is a communist. Communist nuclei should be formed in every factory. Thus organized the CP will not altogether disappear from the political scene, leaving the ground free to imposters like Satya as some comrades fear will be the effect if the CP were illegal. It will continue to function, carry on its propaganda, participate in every department of the political life of the country. Not known publicly as such, the communists will not be liable to arrest any time. The police will not know where the headquarters of the CP are to be raided any moment. The names of the members of the central committee should not be published so that they can be arrested on any pretext.

The Workers and Peasants Party, undoubtedly a party, develops more quickly and wields a much greater influence if it can function legally. Illegality is specially disadvantageous in India where the working class is largely illiterate, and therefore, the propaganda must be carried on mainly orally. Besides, in India the task is to organize and lead a mass movement. It is almost impossible to do it without legal possibilities. Therefore we propose the formation of the WPP through which the communists can function legally, through which agitation and propaganda can be carried on legally, and the workers and peasants can be organized to defend the interest of their class.

But the WPP is not and should not be merely a legal cover for the CP. In that case it would only be a change of name to deceive the police; it would not be necessary to have two parties; there should be only one party with a legal and an underground organization. We proposed the.formation of the WPP as a much broader organization.

It should be the rallying ground of the exploited social elements (proletariat, peasantry and petty-bourgeois) which must unite themselves in a revolutionary struggle against foreign imperialism and native reaction, the elements that must participate in the struggle for the creation of such political and economic conditions as will help the proletariat in its further struggle against capitalism. The communists should be in the WPP and by virtue of their being the conscious vanguard of the working class will be the driving force of the party. But the WPP is distinct from the CP in that its programme is not a communist programme, its programme is the programme of democratic revolution which includes the realization of the minimum political and economic demands of the workers and peasants. *The CP supports this programme as its minimum programme.* The main points in the programme of the WPP are: overthrow of imperialist domination; direct or indirect establishment of a democratic state with full political rights for the workers and peasants; nationalization of land (abolition of landlordism, native states and other feudal remains), land tax not exceeding 15 per cent of the net income, exemption from taxation for poor peasants cultivating 'uneconomic' holdings, annulment of agricultural indebtedness; control over usury (interest not to exceed 5 per cent), cheap agricultural credit; nationalization of means of transportation and basic industries (mining, iron and steel); 8-hour day and 44-hour week; minimum wage, guaranteeing a fixed standard of living, specific improvement of labour and housing conditions; free primary education; insurance against unemployment, sickness, old age, the state and the employers contributing 75 per cent to the fund; workers' committees in the factories and peasants' committees in the villages to enforce the programme; freedom of press, speech and assembly; right to strike and carry arms; freedom of religion and worship; equal political and economic rights for women.

The social elements ready to fight for this programme are not all necessarily communists and never will be communists; but organized in the WPP they will be under the influence of the proletariat and be led by the CP without subscribing to its programme of socialism.

The gradual decomposition of the bourgeois-nationalist parties creates conditions very favourable for the rapid growth of a party with such a revolutionary programme. Sincerely revolutionary petty-bourgeois elements, particularly the declassed intellectuals, will before long rally to the WPP, which will thus provide the CP a very broad base of operation in order to strike root in the worker and peasant masses.

The present form of its organization obstructs the development of the WPP. It is too openly identified with the CP. This keeps away from it many revolutionary elements who would join it on the above programme. It is publicly known that practically all the members of the CC of the CP are the leaders of the WPP. Of course, in fact it should be so, but the cat has been unnecessarily let out of the bag by publishing the list of the CC of the CP.[7] This mistake must be rectified as soon as possible. It can be given that a conference of the CP has been held to discuss the present political situation; among other things, the conference has elected a new CC of the party. So legally the comrades who, by virtue of the list published by the party, are known as members of the CC of the CP, will cease to be so, although they may actually continue to be the members of the CC of CP. In fact such a conference should be actually held to discuss the questions of propaganda, organization, tactics in the political situation created by the boycott of the RC and the left orientation of the TUC, the organization of the WPP and international affiliation. In the present political situation, the CP must show some sign of life at least by issuing a manifesto in which an analysis of the situation from the point of view of the working class should be given, together with concrete propositions as regards the development of the anti-imperialist struggle. I shall send a draft of such a manifesto shortly.

In the organization of the WPP, simultaneously with the mistake committed as a result of legalist deviation as regards the CP another mistake is also committed on the other extreme. In Bengal, for example, the WPP tries to accommodate landlords with the communists. Naresh Sen Gupta certainly does not agree with the programme of the WPP.[8] His articles in the *Gana Bani* are the evidence of his disagreement. The views contained in those articles should not find place in the organ of the WPP if this should be what we desire it to be. Still Naresh Sen Gupta was the president of the party and now has been succeeded by another landlord, Atul Sen.[9] Members should be admitted in the party not on the payment of some donation, but on full agreement with the programme of the party. Otherwise, there never will be any party. Financial difficulties do handicap the growth of the party but such mistakes on either extremes are more responsible for the stagnation of the party.

A political party is the organized vanguard of a class. It can grow politically and numerically only by drawing in its ranks the politically-developed and socially-conscious elements of the class it represents. Adhesion of a few known persons as leaders does not make a party. The party must have members. Both the CP and WPP are very deficient in this respect. They must recruit members from the proletariat and those declassed intellectuals fully and unconditionally identifying themselves with the proletariat. The WPP should recruit members from the workers and peasant masses, as well as from the revolutionary petty-bourgeois nationalists subscribing to its programme of revolutionary democracy. Each of the present members of either parties must be given the task of recruiting, say in three months, at least 10 new members in case of the CP and 50 in case of WPP. Arrangement should be made for the education of the new members about party principles, programme, organization, etc. Then they, in their turn, should be given the task to recruit further members. Thus the party must be built, laying one brick upon another, so to say.

The party of the working class is not the same as the nationalist parties which are amorphous organizations of agitation, but not fighting organs which the party of the working class must be. Strict adherence to the programme, constant participation in the struggle for the realization of the programme, political and organizational discipline—these are the conditions of membership of the working class party. Every member should daily perform a definite party work, recruiting new members, circulating party organs and other literature, agitation, propaganda in the TU, in the peasant movement, etc. Payment of party dues and purchase of party organ are obligatory for each member.

An essential difference between the CP and WPP is in the form of organization. While the former can have only individual membership, the latter will have individual as well as collective membership. TU, peasant organization, etc. should be affiliated to the WPP. Then the communists will carry on propaganda inside these affiliated bodies and recruit individual members for the CP. The communists in each WPP organization must work as a compact group under the direction of CC of the CP.

It is high time for the WPP to have a national organization and a national CC. The situation is very favourable to convene a congress for the formation of the WPP on the national scale.[10] The agenda of the congress will have the following questions: (1) The political situation, and the task of the workers and peasants; (2) programme of the party; (3) constitution of the party; (4) organizational tasks; (5) international affiliation; and (6) election of the CC. The discussion of the first point will lay down the necessity for the organization of a political party of the workers and peasants to conduct the struggle for the promotion of their class interest which demands the overthrow of imperialist domination over the political life of the country; the WPP will, therefore, take a leading part in the fight for national freedom and in this will cooperate with other parties carrying on the similar struggle. The outlines of the programme are given above. The main points in the constitution are: workers and peasants, and those fighting for the realization of the minimum political and economic demands of the workers and peasants, as formulated in the party programme, are eligible for membership; collective membership; entrance into the National Congress as an independent political party with full right of criticism. The international nature of class and anti-imperialist struggle should be recognized and on this basis the WPP should declare its affiliation to the League against Imperialism.[11] A CC of say 11 or 13 members should be elected as the supreme organ of the party till the next congress. TU leaders under communist influence should be elected as the CC. Men closely connected with peasant movement with revolutionary outlook should also be there. Finally, petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalist leaders with influence upon the masses and subscribing to our programme should also be drawn in. Making room for all these auxiliary elements, the communists must have the majority on the CC of the WPP. Otherwise there is no guarantee that it will develop in the right revolutionary direction. The congress should also elect a delegation of 3 to the next world congress of the League against Imperialism.

1. *The Party Press*: It is the main instrument to build up the party. Special attention should be devoted to it. The papers published should be conducted as organs of the same party and not as personal organs. I am obliged to give this warning because judging from his letters, Edward considers the Calcutta paper as his personal business. We must all appreciate what he has done to keep up the paper which is a good paper generally, but he must also know that he has done this for the party. We know the difficulty with which the papers are run; but he puts the question not in the correct way. He says: 'Help me keep up the paper, and I will publish stuff sent by you.' The papers belong to the party, must be kept up by the collective effort of the party and must be run collectively by the party. We must have international support, but unless the basis is found inside the country, the whole thing will be hanging in the air. The circulation of the paper must be built up. To write a good paper is not enough. It should be placed before those who must read it. And those who will be interested in the paper must pay for its upkeep. Our party press, built up on this principle, applied in practice with the necessary international support, will rapidly develop and be a powerful factor in the political life of the country. But it should be built not from the top but from the bottom Then the paper must be written, keeping in view the nature of the readers we want to reach. For example, the Calcutta paper does not observe this condition. It is full of articles written more for Tagorian literature effect than for saying something to the workers and peasants. This must be changed if the paper is to be put on its own feet.

Then the party press must be centralized. All the papers, irrespective of the language and province they are published in, should be conducted with a common programme—the programme of the party. Apart from materials dealing with the local events and conditions, all the party organs must publish some general articles sent out from the party headquarters. Contributions from members of the emigrant section of the party should be likewise dealt with.

A central organ of the party is necessary. But the question can be raised practically only after a national centre of the party is created. Meanwhile the ground can be sounded. The paper obviously must be in English containing stuff that will be reprinted in translation by the provincial organs. I am afraid that we lack sufficient force to undertake such a task immediately. The main difficulty is not financial. It is political. We will have great difficulty in finding suitable editor and contributors to such an organ. There is no use of adding to the Indian press one more paper which will not strike out clearly a new way and will maintain constantly this position. Therefore, in our opinion, it is not necessary to be in a hurry about it. Look over the ground, find the political forces required, explore the possibility for raising part of the finance in India, then we will see.

2. *International Affiliation*: On this question there has been confusion and uncertainty. Let us make it clear once and for all. As far as the WPP is concerned, the question is answered; it should affiliate itself with the League against Imperialism. That will serve our purpose. Through that you will have the relations and aid you need; but you will not be condemned of having connection with M.[12] It is politically important also. Up till now the League has its relation with India through Jawaharlal Nehru. The connection with the League has done him some good as indicated by his action in the Madras congress.[13] But we need not entertain much illusion about him. The League must have relation with the revolutionary organizations. Comrade Jhab wala is already in correspondence with the League. The WPP can eventually become the recognized organ of the League in India. A delegation to the League will give us opportunity to have a meeting to discuss all our problems, political, organizational, financial, technical.

The CP must unquestionably be a section of the CI. It is practically treated as such, but no formal request to this effect has as yet come from our party in India.

Up till now the CI has acted upon the affiliation of the emigrant section of the CP of India.[14] In the conference of the CP suggested above the question of international affiliation should be decided, clearly passing a resolution on the affiliation and this resolution should be communicated to the latter. As the CP will be underground, declaration of its affiliation to the CI will not harm it while its status as the section of the international organization will be clearly and formally established. The political significance of the affiliation should be clearly understood. By this act, Indian communists organized in a party will become integral members of a centralized world party, placing themselves under its supreme direction. International affiliation should not be interpreted only as the means of getting material aid for the movement in India. There is reason to fear that our comrades in India do not fully appreciate the implication of international affiliation. For example, in a resolution of the last conference of the party, it was stated that the Indian communists were communists without being recognized by any foreign organization as such and did not want to be dictated by any foreign organization. This statement might have been influenced by the attitude of Sak and Camp.[15] Nevertheless it indicated a wrong conception of international affiliation. Either the CP of India is a section of the CI or not. If it is, then it must have the same status, right and obligation as all the other sections, and there are 62 of them. The CP of India cannot enter the CI with special privileges, 'extra-territorial rights' so to say, but no obligation, no discipline. You cannot only demand material support and refuse to abide by the programme and directions of the mightiest world organization. I put to you the question frankly and hope you will make a clear decision. A communist party must be an organic part of the world communist organization.[16] It cannot be otherwise and call itself communist. Those who smell 'foreign dictation' in this organization principle of a body that carries on a relentless struggle throughout the world, are not communists. They do not understand the ABC of Marxism and Leninism and have faulty conception of the international nature of class struggle.

In this connection, a few words about your conflict with Sak and Camp may be said, although the episode can be taken as closed. The proposals made by them as regards affiliation with Minority Movement and instructions from London did not have the sanction of the CPGB or the CI. Those propositions were in violation of the organizational principle of the CI which are fully adhered to by its British section. Neither did the suggestions of Camp as regards your connection with me have any authority. Those were his personal opinions and should be dismissed as such. The centres in Berlin and Paris are the agencies of the CI to look after the Indian affairs. The CP of India will have its relation with the CI through those centres and not through London.[17] Any British comrade that may come to India, comes to work there under the supervision, and in accord with the CC of the CP of India. He has no superior right unless he comes with a mandate from the CI as its representative. No such representative has as yet been sent to India. So you know the position.

The Representative of the WPP: Some months ago, a representative of the Bengal WPP arrived in M. Edward will tell you who he is. He is still there in the International Lenin School on his own desire. He came as the representative of the party, but to everybody's surprise, acted as he wanted personally. Firstly, he could give the International very little information; secondly, he had no definite instruction from the party, nobody knows why he came; thirdly, he is a member of the CC of the CP (although he is no communist) but was not in a position to say anything as regards the international affiliation of the party; fourthly, his whole behaviour towards the Indian communists was very reserved, not friendly and comradely; fifthly, he refused to return home to report to his party over the result of his visit to the International and declared that his plan was to stay half a year in Europe, studying all sides of the situation; sixthly, he maintains relations with all kinds of people on the plea that a communist need not be isolated; seventhly, he stated that he can rely more upon the materials got from social-democratic sources than from the communists because these are prejudiced while the former are more objective. So on and so forth. Nevertheless we have induced him to join the Lenin school hoping that some political education and ideological understanding may change his attitude.[18] Your relation with the International certainly will not improve by sending such representatives. We hope to welcome some real representative soon and that meanwhile you will send some instruction to the present incumbent, if he really represents the party. Another suggestion is that he should be removed from the CC of the CP if not altogether from the party.

3. *Coordination of Our Activities*: Indian communists in emigration are members of the CP of India and are automatically members of the WPP. We expect to be treated by the comrades at home as such. We should not be looked upon as outsiders who could serve you only as financial agent. As members of the same party nationally and internationally, we must coordinate our efforts. It is not only in the case of India that a section of the party is forced to be in emigration. The centre of the Russian party till the revolution was abroad. Our respective efforts can be coordinated as follows:

Foreign Bureau: It will be the organ of the CP abroad as was decided by the last conference of the party. Uniting in itself the representation of the CP and the agency of the CI it will be the most competent organ through which the relation between the two will be maintained and the latter will direct the former. Of course, the existence of the Foreign Bureau and its functions do not preclude the representation of the CP directly in the headquarters of the CI and a representative of the latter visiting India when necessary and convenient. The functions of the foreign bureau are—(1) to publish *The Masses*; (2) to produce Marxist literature particularly for India; (3) to educate party workers;

(4) to act as the organ through which the CI guides the activities of its Indian section. The bureau will have 3 members, viz the comrade in Paris, CPD and myself. A resolution of the party concerning the foreign bureau should be sent to the CI in order that all possibilities of misunderstanding and conflict as in the case of Sak's and Camp's visit will be eliminated for the future.

The Masses: Some explanation about the role of it appears to have become necessary, much to our surprise. Edward, in one of his letters referred to above, suggests the abolition of *The Masses* and states that a similar paper can be published in India and we can all contribute to it. Unquestionably the publication of our organs inside the country is preferable to their publication abroad. But could we possibly publish *The Masses* in India? I doubt. Such suggestions as regards *The Masses* are made by comrades who apparently forget that it is an organ of the CI, to provide the Indian communists with the ideological and political guide they need. Can an organ of the CI be published inside a country where, in addition to innumerable other difficulties, there even does not exist a properly constituted section of it? If we, the Indian communists, accept the leadership of the CI then *The Masses* must continue and do valuable service to the Indian proletarian movement in the future as it did in the past.

The Masses should be recognized by the CP of India as a very valuable instrument of its development and to increase its circulation should be one of the fundamental tasks of the party. Every member of the CP must read *The Masses*. *The Masses* is the standard of the CP and to push its circulation should be the lever to promote the growth of the party. The circulation should be built as much as possible on paying basis. As an organ of the CI *The Masses* is the central organ of the CP of India.

Conference Abroad: I have touched upon a whole series of questions covering all the principal departments of our activities.

None of the questions, however, has been exhaustively dealt with. It cannot be done in one letter. Besides, many of the questions are likely to provoke discussion which will be very welcome because when we will come to an agreement after free and frank discussion, the solid basis for collective work will be laid and the party will only be benefited by it. . . . We need a conference, and it can be only abroad; because apart from ourselves, the participation of others will be highly valuable, but they cannot come to India. Therefore, the proposal to send a few leading comrades representing different views is hereby made for your consideration. The comrades will not have to go to the headquarters, we will meet somewhere in west Europe. Comrades busy in TU work can be selected. They can travel legally. In a separate letter the names will be suggested. Here, I only emphasize upon the political importance of such a conference. Together with a few comrades of ours, several TU and left nationalist leaders (Sasmal?) sympathetic towards us can be sent.[19]

Now the financial matter. During the last months there was disturbance for reasons known to you. Arrangement has been newly made to continue the aid for the three papers and also for the monthly in the north, if necessary. Besides provision has also been made for other necessities as specified in a report received two months ago. This is temporary arrangement. Things will be in better shape in the new year. But we remain convinced that all these practical questions can also be satisfactorily settled when some of you could come out for a visit. The new arrangement will be according to a plan, which will be communicated to you in due time. Meanwhile, I may mention that the plan will include the publication by the WPP of a series of small pamphlets dealing elementarily with the theoretical and organizational questions of working class politics. The party press must be systematized, centralized and reorganized with the determination to make it at least partially self-supporting within a given period. Small apparatuses for the two parties will have to be created with specific tasks. The question of printing press is being considered. But previous experience is not encouraging. It is not at all more economical to buy press abroad. Please find out how much money will be needed to buy one or two small printing establishments in the country. I am of the opinion that for our present purposes we do not need our own press which will only lock up money that could be more profitably used.

I hope to have regular correspondence with you henceforth. With very best wishes for success in the common struggle.

30 December 1927

Notes

[1] A Communist Party of India was founded by M.N. Roy at Tashkent on 17 October 1920. Through emissaries, journals, books and extensive correspondence Roy succeeded from abroad in establishing several communist groups in India—in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) and Punjab. In December 1925 some of his contacts formed the Communist Party of India at a conference in Kanpur. However, the Party's functioning as more than a collection of local groups and individuals did not start till the enlarged meeting of its Central Executive held in Bombay in May 1927. This meeting adopted the constitution of the Communist Party of India, elected the office-bearers, passed resolutions and adopted the executive's annual report which was published from Bombay. The office-bearers mentioned in the annual report included Muzaffar Ahmad and S.A. Dange as members of the Presidium and S.V. Ghate as General Secretary.

The Labour Swaraj Party (founded at Calcutta in November 1925) changed its name to the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party in February 1926. In Bombay the Congress

Labour Party adopted the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Party in February 1927. Roy, who had been advocating the formation of WPP for some time, wrote in *The Masses of India* (April 1927) explaining that the WPP 'will, on the one hand, strengthen the forces of the Left in the nationalist movement, and on the other hand it will prepare the way for a powerful class leadership of the revolutionary workers and peasants'. During 1927 Philip Spratt, a Comintern emissary who had reached India in December 1926, was busy organizing WPPs in Punjab and the UP. In December 1927 it was decided to organize a conference to establish the Workers' and Peasants' Party of India, and the All-India WPP was at last founded in December 1928. The national executive consisted of four representatives each of the parties in Bombay, Bengal, Punjab and the UP. It included, among others, S. A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad, S.V. Ghate, Sohan Singh and P.C. Joshi.

[2] Roy was in China from January to July-August 1927. The 'comrades in charge of things' during his absence were Clemens Dutt of CPGB and Mohammed Ali (Sepassi). With Roy as chairman they constituted the 'Foreign Bureau of the CPI' which had been established by the Comintern after the Amsterdam meeting of July 1925.

[3] The Annual Report adopted by the enlarged meeting of the executive of the CPI in May 1927 reached Roy after his return from China.

[4] In his clandestine correspondence Muzaffar Ahmad's alias was Edward.

[5] For 'the experience in China' see *Selected Works of M.N. Roy*, Vol. II, 1988, pp 567–698.

[6] For Satyabhakta, the Kanpur Case, and the 'Indian Communist Party', see *Selected Works of M.N. Roy*, Vol. II, pp. 411–23.

[7] The Annual Report of the CPI 1927 which was printed and published at Bombay shortly after the Central Executive meeting gave the full list of the office-bearers (Presidium, General Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee) with office-addresses at Calcutta, Lahore, Madras and Bombay.

[8] Naresh Chandra Sengupta (1882–1964) was a well-known advocate of the Calcutta High Court who had taught law at Dacca University (1917–24) and was later Tagore Professor of Law at Calcutta University (1950). He was also author of sixty novels and plays. He was elected President of the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party at its foundation conference at Krishnanagar in February 1926. On social and literary issues his views were radical by contemporary standards, but he did not think that 'breaking away from the British Empire was absolutely necessary' for the political, social and economic freedom of the Indian people.

[9] *Ganabani*, started August 1926, was the organ of the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party. It incorporated the earlier journal *Langal* which had been the organ of the Labour–Swaraj Party.

Naresh Chandra Sengupta was succeeded by Atul Chandra Gupta (184–1961) as President of Bengal Peasant's and Workers' Party. Gupta (mistakenly surnamed 'Sen' in the 'Assembly Letter') was also a distinguished advocate of the Calcutta High Court who taught law for ten years at Calcutta University and wrote several books on literature, land reform and philosophy of history.

[10] The proposed conference was held in the Albert Hall, Calcutta on 21, 22 and 23 December 1928 where it was resolved that 'the Workers' and Peasants' Party of India be established with these parties [of Bombay, Punjab, the UP and Bengal] as its provincial branches, and other provincial committees and branches to be formed with the approval of the national executive committee' (Report of the First All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference, in Meerut Record, p. 549). On 1 February 1929 *Inprecor* (Vol. 9, No. 6) published an article by Roy on the WPPI conference in which he counselled the Party to develop a 'united front on the common platform of anti-imperialist struggle'. But the Comintern had already adopted an ultra-left line at its Sixth Congress, and Roy's view was severely attacked by Paul Schubin, representing the official view, in two successive issues of *Inprecor* (Vol 9, Nos 16 and 17, 29 March, 5 April 1929).

[11] The League Against Imperialism (Liga Gegen Imperialismus) was founded at a Congress of Oppressed Nationalities held at Palais Egmont in Brussels from 10 to 15 February 1927. The Congress was attended by 175 delegates from 37 countries. The principal organizer of the Congress and the person who really ran the League on behalf of the Comintern was Willi Muenzenberg. The Congress adopted the constitution of the League and elected an executive of nine members which included Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammad Hata (Indonesia) and Leopold Senghor (Africa). There were also four substitute members, one of whom was Henri Barbusse. An official report of the Congress was published from Berlin under the title *Das Flammenzeichen vom Palais Egmont* by Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1927. The Congress proceedings and resolutions were reported in *Inprecor*.

[12] 'M' here stands for Moscow but probably also for M.N. Roy. In the Kanpur Conspiracy Case the main charge was that the accused (Muzaffar, Dange, Usmani, Singaravelu and Ghulam Hussein) were 'working in India as Roy's agents' and trying to build up a 'revolutionary communist organization according to his directions'. (Home Pol F 261 KW 1924.)

[13] In 1926 Nehru was contacted in Europe by the organizers of the proposed Congress of Oppressed Nationalities, and his response was positive and enthusiastic. He wanted both the Indian National Congress and the AI Trade Union Congress to send representatives. The Gauhati session of the Indian National Congress appointed Nehru 'as its representative to the Congress of Oppressed Nations'. Nehru took an active part in the Congress, was elected to its Presidium, and at its concluding session he was elected a member of the executive of the League against Imperialism. He also met Roy briefly in Moscow (J. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 154). At the Madras Session of the Congress, Nehru moved the famous resolution which declared 'the goal of the Indian people to be complete national independence', but his speech was somewhat ambiguous when he explained that the resolution 'leaves the door of the Congress open to such persons as may perhaps be satisfied with a lesser goal'. (*Indian Quarterly Register* Vol. II, 1927, p. 381.)

[14] At the Fifth Congress (1924) of the Comintern which elected Roy as full member of its Executive Committee and Presidium, the Communist Party of India was listed as a section of the Comintern, but this CPI was the emigré Party founded in 1920. Even after the formal establishment of the CPI at the Kanpur Conference (1925) the local leaders were afraid and unwilling to affiliate the Party formally with the Comintern. The Constitution of the CPI adopted at the May 1927 meeting stated that the 'Foreign Bureau' was 'the organ through which the international relations of the Party will be maintained'. Early in 1929 a new draft constitution was prepared which for the first time specifically declared that the CPI in India was a 'section of the Communist International'. In December 1930 *Inprecor* published a 'Draft Platform Action of the CPI' which openly proclaimed the CPI to be 'a section of the Communist International'.

[15] Sak= Saklatvala; Camp = Campbell.

Sapurji Dorabji Saklatvala (1874–1936), nephew of the pioneering industrialist J.N. Tata, was sent to England where he joined the Independent Labour Party, and subsequently the CPGB. He was elected Member of Parliament from Battersea North. He toured India in 1927 and spoke in public meetings at Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Delhi, Lahore and Madras, mainly under the auspices of the Indian National Congress and the Trade Union Congress. Although himself a Communist, his atttitude to the organization of a Communist Party of India was quite sceptical. There was no love lost between him and Roy.

Donald Campbell was the alias of George Allison, a prominent member of the CPGB, who arrived in Bombay in April 1926 with a false passport 'to develop the left wing inside the Trade Union Congress'. He was arrested in November 1926, sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, and deported on the expiry of his sentence.

[16] The Statutes of the Communist International adopted at the Fifth Congress (June–July 1924) made the centralism of the organization stricter and more clearly defined. 'The ECCI is the leading organ of the CI. It issues binding directives to all parties and organizations affiliated to the CI and supervises their activities' (Statute No 11). 'The ECCI has the right to expel from the CI parties, groups or individuals who act contrary to the programme, the Statutes, the decisions of the World Congress, or the ECCI' (No 14). 'All national congresses . . . may be convened by sections of the Comintern only with the consent of the ECCI' (No 32). The 'Theses on the Bolshevization of Communist Parties' adopted at the Fifth enlarged Plenum of the ECCI (March–April 1925) fully spelled out the organizational implications of affiliation. For the Statutes and the Theses, Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol 2, pp. 117–22; 188–200.

[17] The jurisdictional conflict over activities in India between Roy and the leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain came out very pointedly when a selection of papers seized during a police raid on communist premises in London in October 1925 was published by the Home Office. (*Communist Papers*, Cmd 2682, London 1926.) As Roy gained prominence in the Comintern, the CPGB tried to undermine his authority and usurp some of his functions; it sought to bypass him in matters relating not only to potential recruits among Indians in England but also to work in India. An 'Indian Bureau' had been formed in London; letters from this bureau addressed personally to Roy were opened and their contents altered by the officials of the CPGB. An agent, Percy Glading, who was an executive committee member of the National Minority Movement, was sent to India in February 1925 by the CPGB; he returned to London in April to report that 'no communist groups existed in India'. His report, uninformed and untrue, was sought to be used to discredit Roy. To resolve the conflict, a secret meeting had to be held in Amsterdam in July 1925 where the British representative R. W. Robson reported 'that the British party desired it to be stated that they should have the right to control work conducted in the British colonies'. This was challenged by Roy and the issue was referred to the Comintern's Colonial Bureau which vested the 'Foreign Bureau' of the CPI with requisite authority in September 1925. This Bureau was headed by Roy and included his lieutenant Sepassi, and a representative of the CPGB, Clemens Dutt. Although this arrangement was continued till early 1928, CPGB's efforts to gain control over the Party in India did not cease in 1926 or 1927.

[18] The reference is to Saumyendranath Tagore, a grand nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. He joined the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal and was elected its General Secretary early in 1927. However, he left India in a hurry in April 1927 fearing the possibility of arrest, and after spending some time in Paris and Berlin, reached Moscow in June. Taking advantage of Roy's absence in China he tried hard to calumniate the latter and press his own claims to Moscow's patronage. He submitted two reports which were considered on Roy's return by the Indian Commission that was set up with Roy, Hugh Rathbone and G. A. Luhani as members. He was asked to return to India, but at his request was allowed to stay on for a while and take some training at the Lenin School. He participated in the Sixth Congress and joined others in maligning Roy and in deliberately misrepresenting the latter's views. He left Moscow for Berlin in December 1928, but to avoid arrest as an accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case he did not return to India till January 1934. For details, Soumyendranath Tagore's autobiography in Bengali, *Yatri*, 1975; M. Ahmad, *The CPI and its Formation Abroad*; also Meerut Records.

[19] Birendranath Sasmal (1881–1934) was a highly successful lawyer who gave up his lucrative practice and joined the non-cooperation movement in 1921; became Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Swarajya Party but broke with it in 1924; President of the Krishnanagar session of the Bengal Provincial Congress. He was moderate in politics, but sympathized with the extremists, and was called 'Deshapran' by his admirers. Pramatha Nath Pal, *Deshapran Sasmal*, B. S., Calcutta, 1368. SNR.

Draft Resolution on the Indian Question

Introductory editorial note

This draft was written for the Sixth Congress of the Communist International (17 July to 1 September 1928). Four years had passed since the Fifth Congress (17 June to 8 July 1924), years of an increasingly intense struggle for power and shifting alliances in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International, climaxing in Stalin's almost complete victory over his rivals by 1928. For destroying Zinoviev and Trotsky, Stalin had used Bukharin and his associates with much cunning and effectiveness. However, during 1928 although Bukharin was still recognized as the principal figure in the Comintern hierarchy (decision to abolish the post of the President had been taken at the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI in December 1926 after Zinoviev's forced resignation, but this was subject to ratification by the Sixth Congress), his position was being thoroughly undermined by Stalin with the help of the *apparatchiki* and his henchmen.

According to a participant's account, 'there were two congresses going on at the Sixth Congress. One was the official congress over which Bukharin presided. . . . Then there was the corridor congress called together by Stalin . . . through it a devastating campaign was carried on against Bukharin as a Rightwinger.' (B. Gitlow, *I Confess*, New York, 1940, pp. 503, 507. Gitlow was an elected member of the Presidium at the Sixth Congress). The chief organizers of this campaign were two young Stalinists, Heinz Neumann and Besso Lominadze who had initiated, after Roy's departure from China, the uprisings at Canton and Nachang respectively, both of which had ended in total disaster. To be able to survive they had, on their return to Moscow, placed themselves unreservedly at Stalin's disposal. Bukharin was fully aware of the precariousness of his position. A few days before the Congress he had a secret meeting with Kamenev, who had been instrumental in bringing about the reconciliation in 1926 between Zinoviev and Trotsky. Bukharin told Kamenev in despair that Stalin 'was a Genghiz Khan . . . who will cut our throats'. (E. H. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, Vol. 2, Penguin 1976, pp. 69–70.) In 1929 Bukharin was removed from the Comintern, editorship of *Pravda* and the CPSU Politbureau. By that time virtually every prominent figure in the Comintern leadership, in the CPSU and in most of the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union, who were known for their independence of spirit and intellectual acumen, had been removed and replaced by Stalin's obedient and amoral appointees. Party bureaucrats like Piatnitsky, Kuusinen, Manuilsky, Lozovsky, Molotov, Thaelmann, Thorez, Kun, Murphy, Ercoli, etc. were used as instruments of the Stalinization process.

The eventual fate of this draft becomes quite understandable when seen in the context of these developments. To the Comintern bureaucrats Roy had all along been the intellectual Asian 'outsider' whose independence they thoroughly disliked. He had always been outspoken in his views, which he had stated at every Congress he attended, and which he had developed and presented in his many books and articles, and through his periodicals. Lenin appreciated his integrity, revolutionary experience and intellectual ability, and gave him his support even when he disagreed with him on the colonial question. Roy also enjoyed Stalin's backing till early 1928; as late as the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI (9 to 25 February) Roy was listed as a member of the Presidium. (*Neuntes Plenum des EKKI*, Hamburg 1928.) At this time he was approached by Kuusinen, Neumann and Lominadze to make his stature as a revolutionary and his abilities as a theorist and author available to the Stalinist *apparatchiki* for undermining Bukharin's authority and for supporting the new Stalinist line. When he flatly refused, his enemies had their chance. Presumably with Stalin's approval (if not directly under his instruction), Roy's views were deliberately distorted and misrepresented by his opponents, and he was subjected to persistent personal attacks. The attack was led by Otto Kuusinen; he was joined by others like Manuilsky, Lozovsky, Schubin, Safarov, Neumann, etc. At the Sixth Congress which he could not attend on account of illness, Roy was removed from his Comintern positions, but he was not yet completely shut out from the official media. His report on China was published early in 1929 from Moscow and Leningrad by the State Publishing House; his articles were also published in *Inprecor* and several other party journals as late as March 1929. With Bukharin's fall, however, all official avenues were closed to Roy. The Tenth Plenum of the ECCI (3 July to 19 July 1929), which removed Bukharin from the ECCI Presidium and from all work in the Comintern (*Inprecor*, 30 August 1929), also proposed that Roy was 'to be considered as expelled from the Communist International' (*Inprecor*, 13 December 1929).

Roy had started writing the draft resolution on the Indian question while he was still in China; this is indicated by the handwritten date 20 May 1927 on the draft manuscript. On his return to Moscow at the end of August or very early in September he learnt that a communist neophyte from Calcutta had arrived in June, and taking advantage of his absence, he had been maligning him, with encouragement from Piatnitsky, the very powerful head of the Political Secretariat of ECCI with whom Roy had never been on good terms. To Roy this was, however disagreeable, not an altogether new experience. The Berlin group of Indian revolutionaries, led by Virendranath Chattopadhyay, and several prominent figures in the Communist Party of Great Britain (who believed that India being a colony, the Communist Party there ought to be controlled by CPGB) had been trying for years to discredit him in the Comintern. It is quite probable that the visit of the communist neophyte, Saumyendranath Tagore, during Roy's absence from Moscow, was not altogether unplanned. Presumably he was encouraged, if not assisted, by Roy's enemies in Calcutta, London, Berlin and Moscow. According to his autobiography in Bengali, *Yatri* (Calcutta, 1975), Saumyendranath's early mentors included George Allison (alias Donald Campbell) and Shapurji Saklatvala—both of CPGB, and both personally hostile to Roy. He met them in Calcutta in 1926–7 and came under their influence. He left Calcutta with a quickly arranged passport in May 1927; according to his own account, he did so because of a warning from the dreaded Police Commissioner of Calcutta, Charles Tegart, which had been passed on to his parents through a member of the Tagore family who was Tegart's personal friend. The relevant passage in *Yatri* explains the quick issuance of his passport which he was asked to collect immediately from the Calcutta Police headquarters. 'I understood that instead of sending me to jail Tegart wanted to dispatch me abroad' (p. 112). In Europe he spent some time in Berlin, where his mentor was Chattopadhyay, before proceeding to Moscow where he presently gave two reports, one of them directly to Piatnitsky. According to Muzaffar Ahmad, Saumyendranath, when he left the country, 'knew a little about conditions in Bengal but he was completely ignorant about the rest of India' (M. Ahmad, *The Communist Party of India and its Formation Abroad*, Calcutta 1962, p. 165). According to Saumyendranath's own admission, when he went to Moscow all that he knew about Marxism and the Indian situation was limited to what he had learnt from reading Roy's writings (*Yatri*, p. 93, 139). Nevertheless, he made out his two reports, one on organization which was devoted to maligning Roy, the other on the political conditions in India which was, in fact, a brazen plagiarism of Roy's arguments without, of course, any acknowledgement of his source. No doubt is left about the plagiarism if one compares his speech at the Sixth Congress (*Inprecor*, 30 October 1928) with Roy's Draft. At the Congress he nevertheless felt no compunction in charging Roy with views which Roy never held, and like others he attacked him on the basis of those deliberate distortions.

However, when Roy returned from China to Moscow he was still a very considerable figure in the Comintern hierarchy. As a member of the Presidium, he took part in the joint meeting of the ECCI and the International Control Commission on 27 September 1927 which expelled Trotsky from the ECCI. When Bukharin as the Comintern's head appointed a Commission in September to consider the Indian Question and Saumyen's report, it comprised Roy, Golam Ambia Lohani (at that time Roy's chief assistant) and Hugh Rathbone (a close follower of Roy, who subsequently collaborated with him in the projected work on the decline and fall of the British Empire). On behalf of the Commission Roy now completed the Draft Resolution which he submitted to the Executive before going to Berlin early in October. It is to this Draft that Kuusinen referred in his Report to the Sixth Congress as 'Comrade Roy's draft resolution of October 1927' (*Inprecor*, 4 Oct. 1928). Roy published a segment of his draft in the November 1927 issue of his monthly *The Masses*, under the title 'The Role of the Bourgeoisie in the National Revolution' (*The Masses*, Vol. III, No 11, pp. 5–8). His view was largely echoed by his disciple and assistant Lohani in his article 'Developments in the Political Situation in India' in the *Communist International* in January and February 1928 (Vol 5, Nos. 2 & 3).

By the time of the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI (9 to 25 February 1928), the situation had begun to change radically and fast. Having completed the political destruction of Zinoviev and Trotsky, Stalin and the *apparatchiki* began eliminating from all positions of authority and importance actual and potential supporters of Bukharin and such other people as could not be bullied or bribed to become agents of the Stalinization process. Stalin had already adopted a militantly left policy in order to outmanoeuvre Trotsky and his supporters; this ultra-leftist line became much more pronounced under pressure of the first Five Year Plan; any opposition to or criticism of the new line was to be ruthlessly suppressed. On arrival in Moscow on 4 February Roy found himself isolated and cold-shouldered. Although he was still a member of the Comintern executive, his draft resolution was not published or formally accepted. Stalin would not see him any longer after having learnt of Roy's rejection of the overtures made through Kuusinen and Neumann. His view on China was not asked although China was a major topic of the Ninth Plenum. Before the Plenum was over Roy fell seriously ill. On 22 February he was found to be suffering from mastoiditis. His medical treatment was neglected. Bedridden and cut off from the deliberations of the Plenum he wanted to return to Berlin for proper medical treatment. On 17 March he wrote guardedly about the situation to Louise Geissler, his secretary–companion and *de facto* wife since she had accompanied him to China, and she came without delay to Moscow. On 24 March Roy from his sick-bed sent to Bukharin the final draft of his Resolution on the Indian Situation for the Sixth Congress; the date is given on the text of the draft. This is the draft which is reproduced here. Piatnitsky tried to prevent Roy's departure for Berlin by refusing to return his passport. However, at Bukharin's intervention, Roy got back his passport and exit visas, and according to Louise Geissler's account, he was taken somewhat secretively from his sick-bed to a plane of Deruluft, a Russo-German Airline, which carried them to Berlin. The flight took place towards the end of March or very early in April, and Roy was never again to go back to the Soviet Union. I have recently been advised by Dr V.P. Kuzmin, First Deputy Director, Institute of Marxist-Leninism, Moscow, that 'archive documents show decision had been taken by the Small Committee of the ECCI Secretariat on 22 May 1928 that M.N. Roy be allowed to go abroad for treatment' (Letter from Dr Kuzmin dated 13 July 1988). Dr Kuzmin was not able to ascertain if this decision which validated Roy's departure *post factum* was due to Bukharin's intervention, although in consonance with Louise Geissler's account this seems very likely. I also understand from Dr Kuzmin's letter that although resolutions to expel Roy were tabled at various meetings, 'the archive documents show that the decision was taken finally on 23 November 1929'. This may explain why a resolution proposed at the Tenth Plenum in July was not published as passed till December. Bukharin was removed from the CPSU Politbureau in November 1929.

At the Sixth Congress, which Roy could not attend, he was severely attacked for his so-called 'decolonization thesis' which however, as presented by his attackers, was very different from his position as stated in the draft. Roy's actual position was a development of the analysis and programme advanced in his earlier works *India in Transition* and *The Future of Indian Politics*. The term 'decolonization' was first used tentatively by Bukharin at the time of the Indian Commission of the ECCI in September 1927. It was also adopted tentatively by Roy to describe the process of the developing senior–junior partnership between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie. In his words, 'the process of the gradual "decolonization" of India is produced by two different factors, namely, (1) post-war crisis of capitalism and (2) the revolutionary awakening of the masses. The process . . . is parallel to the process of "de-revolutionization" of the Indian bourgeoisie'. Roy's draft was never published by the Comintern, but he himself subsequently brought out the text of his statement which he submitted to the ECCI in reply to the criticism made at the Sixth Congress. This statement (*Our Differences*, Calcutta, 1938, pp. 44–114) is reproduced elsewhere in the present volume.

SNR.

Draft Resolution
on The Indian Question

I The Position of Imperialism and the Characteristic of Indian Economy

1. Until the beginning of the twentieth century India was a victim of the classical form of imperialist exploitation, supplying market and raw materials to the metropolitan (British) industries. The policy of imperialism was to keep India in a backward state of economy—an agricultural reserve and monopoly market for the British industries. British capital exported into India was mainly for the purpose of building railways, harbours, irrigation works, etc. to extend trade and tap greater sources of raw materials. By far the larger portion of the capital exported was loaned to the Government of India for the above purposes (80 per cent of the British capital invested in India was loaned to the Indian government). The principal sources of imperialist profit were trade and interests on loan guaranteed by the government. (£20,000,000 is a recurring annual charge on the Indian Exchequer to pay the interests on the loan raised in England).

British capital invested in India directly (not as a loan to the government) went also largely for railway-building; only a small amount in such non-competitive industry as tea plantation. Finance capital was the backbone of imperialist domination. Development of modern industries in India was inimical to the interests of metropolitan industries which wanted an absolute monopoly of the Indian market. Capital accumulated as a result of industrial prosperity at home was exported to India not to foment there the growth of competitive means of production, but to enlarge the market for the products of the metropolitan industries. The growth of indigenous industries with Indian capital was obstructed by all means. They had not only to meet the competition of the much more highly developed British industrial system; they were subjected to legal disadvantages (tariff laws on the principle of free trade). An economically backward country was subjected to intense capitalist exploitation. The result was impoverishment of the bulk of the population, overcrowding of the agricultural industry, and unsteadiness of the entire economic life of the country. The periodic famines costing tens of millions of human lives were the evidence of the chronic unsteadiness of the national economy.[1]

Considerable wealth was accumulated by the Indian landowning class and the trading bourgeoisie. The imperialist policy of obstructing the growth of modern industry in India prevented the transformation of this wealth into fluid capital. The major portion of this wealth was locked up in government securities, thus tying the pioneers of the Indian bourgeoisie to imperialist finance. The other outlet was usury which become ruinous for the peasantry. In this way the bourgeoisie became partner of the landlords in the business of exploiting the peasantry. The entire credit system was monopolized by imperialist finance blocking all the avenues of profitable and productive investment for native capital. The national bourgeoisie grew as an integral part of the imperialist economy—participating in the trade controlled by imperialist finance and as *rentiers* deriving their income through banks also controlled by imperialist finance.

2. The post-war crisis of capitalism forced British imperialism to change its old economic policy of keeping India in industrial backwardness. Already in the beginning of the war it was felt that in her economic backwardness India was a weak link in the chain of the British empire. The more far-seeing imperialists recognized the necessity of changing the old policy and recommended that new methods of exploitation should be adopted to meet the new situation. (The Viceroy Hardinge's memorial to the imperialist government in 1915).[2]

The exigencies of war expedited the plan of industrialization. The armies on the eastern front (Mesopotamia, Gallipoli, East Africa, etc.,) could be supplied only from India. Arms, ammunitions, transport vehicles, army outfit should all be manufactured in India. Indigenous metallurgical and engineering industries, that had for years struggled to grow in the face of imperialist competition, suddenly received state patronage. In 1916 was appointed the Indian Industrial Commission presided over by the leading spokesman of the 'forward policy' to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development in India.

After two years' investigation the Commission recommended that the government must play an active part in the industrial development of India (*Report of Indian Industrial Commission 1916–18*). The same Commission also recommended that 'it is vital for the government to ensure the establishment in India of those industries whose absence exposes us to grave danger in the event of war'.

Another consideration contributed to the change of the old policy. Taking advantage of the inability of Britain to supply the Indian market with manufactured goods, owing to the militarization of home industries and dislocation of maritime transport, Japan seriously threatened British monopoly of the Indian market. Japan could be kept out of the Indian market only by increasing the industrial production in India. The disabilities under which the cotton industry (the oldest and largest industry owned almost exclusively by native capital before the war) had laboured during decades, were partially removed, so that it could increase production and resist Japanese encroachment on the Indian market. Eventually, Indian cotton industry was granted practical protection (import duty of 11.5 per cent). British capital flowed into the partially protected Indian cotton industry.

For decades the Lancashire textile interests had dominated British policy in India. To protect and further these interests the doctrine of free trade was imposed upon industrially backward, agrarian India. The abandoning of that traditional policy and adoption, in its stead, of the policy of 'discriminating protection' marked a radical change in the position of British imperialism in India. The swing from Cobdenism to Baldwinism indicates that the basis of British imperialism (in India) is shifted from trade capital and trading finance to industrial and banking capital. There is a fundamental difference between imperialism in the period of capitalist prosperity and imperialism in the period of capitalist decline.

3. The colonial exploitation of India is no longer for imperialist expansion—the result of capitalist prosperity. Now it is a means for capitalist stabilization.[3] The forms and methods of the exploitation, therefore, are changing. Imperialism wants to plunder India more than ever; but it lacks the wherewithal. Hundred and seventy years' brutal exploitation ruined the country. The standard of living of the masses sank lower and lower. Today imperialism must have a larger and steadier market to overcome the industrial depression at home. India cannot provide the required market, if she is kept in a backward and unsteady economy. Nor can Britain export sufficient capital to develop the potentialities of the Indian market. The accumulation of capital in England is on the decline. Sufficient capital cannot be exported without injuring the industries at home (testimony of J. M. Keynes).

The profits derived from past investments in India go to England mostly in the form of raw materials. These are necessary for the upkeep of the home industries. The profits from past investments can, therefore, be used to meet new capital demands in India by depriving, on the one hand, home industries of raw materials, and by the industrialization of India, on the other. Unless the raw materials are transformed into manufactured goods, they cannot be converted in India into money capital ready for re-investment.

4. Apart from her enormous reservoir of natural riches and labour power, India possesses a very considerable amount of wealth, which could not be converted into productive capital owing to the old policy of imperialism. To harness this wealth for the benefit of

imperialism is the present policy. Industrialization of India is the corollary of this policy. If India could be industrialized mainly with Indian capital, but under imperialist financial and political domination, British capitalism might survive the present crisis.

Industrialization of India immediately creates a market for the British metallurgical and engineering trades. Development of the productive forces will raise the purchasing power of India. Direct exploitation of Indian labour in more productive forms will increase the total amount of surplus value produced. Granting the native bourgeoisie the share, imperialism will derive greater profit than ever. The capitalist accumulation in India, which will be very rapid and large, owing to the superfluity and cheapness of labour power, will more than compensate for the decline of accumulation in England. Industrialization of India will thus strengthen the position of imperialism—will be a factor contributing to the stabilization of capitalism—provided that it takes place within the framework of the British empire.

5. Imperialism must proceed very cautiously in this new path which is as likely to lead it out of the post-war crisis as to destruction. The implication of the new policy is a gradual 'de-colonization' of India, which will be allowed to evolve out of the state of 'dependency' to 'Dominion Status'. The Indian bourgeoisie, instead of being kept down as a potential rival, will be granted partnership in the economic development of the country under the hegemony of imperialism. From a backward, agricultural colonial possession India will become a modern, industrial country—a 'member of the British Commonwealth of free nations'. India is in a process of 'decolonization' in so far as the policy forced upon British imperialism by the post-war crisis of capitalism abolishes the old, antiquated forms and methods of colonial exploitation in favour of new forms and new methods. The forces of production, which were so far denied the possibilities of normal growth, are unfettered. The very basis of national economy changes. Old class relations are replaced by new class relations. The basic industry, agriculture, stands on the verge of revolution. The prevailing system of landownership which hinders agricultural production is threatened with abolition. The native bourgeoisie acquires an ever-growing share in the control of the economic life of the country. These changes in the economic sphere have their political reflex. The unavoidable process of gradual 'decolonization' has in it the germs of disruption of the empire. As a matter of fact, the new policy adopted for the consolidation of the empire—to avoid the danger of immediate crash—indicates that the foundation of the empire is shaken. Imperialism is a violent manifestation of capitalist prosperity. In this period of capitalist decline its base is undermined.

6. The recommendations of the Industrial Commission to encourage the growth of modern industries in India were followed up by the decision of the government to place with manufacturers in India orders for government requirements, railway materials etc. This gave tremendous impetus to the iron and steel and engineering industries. British concerns projected and actually established large engineering works in India (Asiatic Steel Corporation, Peninsular Locomotive Company etc.). In 1923, the policy of protection, which had already been practically in operation, though not in general, received legislative sanction. The British government of India adopted the principle of 'discriminate protection'.[4]

Measures were also taken to create conditions for the capitalist development of the country. Relatively heavy taxes added to the other forms of exploitation had reduced the purchasing capacity of the masses to the very minimum. The British Government of India set up a committee (the Taxation Enquiry Committee) to determine how the taxable capacity could be readjusted so as to remove the limitation on the internal market. Finally, the bottom-rock of the whole situation was touched. Capitalist development of the country cannot take place without solving the agrarian problem.

7. The landowning classes have always been the ally of the British power in India. As a matter of fact, in the earlier stages of its domination in India British imperialism created a class of tax-farming landlords as its social basis, so to say. While the agricultural industry was brought directly under capitalist exploitation in certain parts of the country by the introduction of modern irrigation system, generally the feudal (and in some places the primitive communal) character of the ownership of land was preserved. The check upon the growth of modern industry and destruction of the handicrafts caused serious overcrowding of the land. The pre-capitalist system of land tenure, under capitalist exploitation, led to such continuous parcelment of holdings that in the majority of cases the holdings became what is characterized as 'non-economic'. The land held in tenancy by the peasant is so little and split up in such minute fragments scattered far away from one another that to cultivate it even only for consumption is not economic employment of labour power. On the basis of such a bankrupt system of agricultural production is reared a superstructure of capitalist economy. The peasantry constitutes nearly 75 per cent of the Indian population. Their purchasing power is the basis of the Indian market. To increase the buying capacity of the peasantry, that is, to rescue the agricultural industry from its present bankrupt backwardness, is an indispensable principle of the capitalist development of the country. To increase agricultural production, to modernize the methods of cultivation, has become the cardinal principle of British

economic policy in India. The present viceroy is an agricultural expert. A Royal commission on agriculture is working to find the ways and means to improve the agricultural industry.[5] This can be done only by changing the present system of land tenure—by abolishing the feudal character of landownership. But this imperialism will not do. It cannot hastily destroy the social basis on which it had largely rested for a hundred and fifty years. The implication of the present 'forward' agricultural policy is, however, that imperialism is changing its orientation from the feudal landowning classes to the bourgeoisie. Here again imperialism must go cautiously, as it were, not to alarm its old faithful ally. To reassure it of continued support the question of landownership has been excluded from the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

The policy is to create conditions for capitalist development not at the expense of the feudal landlords, but by driving the poor peasantry from the land. It is sought to create a class of well-to-do peasants through official cooperative credit banks. It is estimated that the policy of agricultural reform will in a year or two create a market for a million steel ploughs, thousands of oil pumping-stations and considerable quantities of other implements required for modern methods of land cultivation. This immediate benefit for capitalism will be followed up by an increase of the agricultural production raising the purchasing power of the peasantry. A more far-reaching result will be the movement of the population from the village to the towns. The labour power tied up at present with non-productive landholding will be released and made available for modern industrial production.

8. India never had her independent credit system. Her national economy has always been the victim of the fluctuation of silver price. British banks (the so-called Exchange Banks as the Hong Kong–Shanghai Bank, the Chartered Bank, the Eastern Bank, etc.) controlling the foreign trade of India were opposed to any stable monetary system. That was the policy dictated by trading and financial interests. In the new situation India must have a credit system based upon a stable currency. The accumulated wealth of the country cannot be converted into fluid productive capital in the absence of credit, a stable currency. The British government is now engaged in tackling this problem: how the accumulated wealth of India can be harnessed for productive purposes under the control of imperialist finance. The plan for the introduction of a gold currency in India is vetoed by the Federal Reserve Bank of the USA which controls the greatest part of the world gold supply. America does not want to help British imperialism to stabilize itself by the 'rationalization' of colonial exploitation. On the other hand, the Indian bourgeoisie demand some control

over the proposed bank of issue. Their proposal is that the proposed bank should be a state-bank with a directorate elected by the legislative assembly. As a result of the prolonged controversy on this question, the Government of India has temporarily dropped the Reserve Bank bill.[6] This reveals the difficulty involved in the scheme of mobilizing India's wealth for the stabilization of British imperialism. The Indian bourgeoisie, will, however, give in. They also need a credit system and stable currency. The financial section of the Indian bourgeoisie is in agreement with the imperialist scheme of a Reserve Bank with share capital.

In spite of its inner contradictions, the capitalist development of India inside the framework of imperalist economy is going on. Indian bourgeoisie, while struggling for greater power, generally cooperate with imperialism in the exploitation of the natural resources and labour power of the country by introducing modern methods and means of production.

II The Role of the Bourgeoisie in the Nationalist Movement

9. So long as imperialist domination was based upon the policy of obstructing the capitalist development of the country, the native bourgeoisie[7] was the driving force of the national movement. But the new change in the policy of imperialism causes a corresponding change in the role of the native bourgeoisie. The nationalist movement, during the last five years, has been greatly influenced by the changing relation between imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie. Successive measures taken to promote capitalist development of the country have coincided with a steady decline in the political demand of bourgeois nationalism. One stratum of the bourgeoisie followed another into cooperation with imperialism on the basis of the latters' hegemony in proportion as concessions to native capitalism were made. Finally, the bourgeois nationalist movement is split up into half a dozen parties all of which are against a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The Indian nationalist movement as representing the bourgeoisie and led by the ideological spokesmen of native capitalism, is committed to the programme of 'Dominion Status'. All that the Indian bourgeoisie desires is 'partnership' in the empire.

As a matter of fact the Indian bourgeoisie never undertook anything, but a 'constitutional' struggle against imperialism. Even when they were positively suppressed by imperialism, they did not advocate a revolutionary struggle for national freedom. The main planks in the platform of the National Congress were constitutional reform, fiscal autonomy and protection for the indigenous industries. In every critical moment the bourgeoisie, directly or indirectly, rallied on the side of imperialism as against the danger of revolution (in 1908, in 1916 and in 1920). Finally, the abandoning of the resented and ruinous policy of free trade in favour of the principle of protection has cleared the ground for the collaboration between imperialism and the nationalist bourgeoisie.

10. There are historical reasons for the remarkably non-revolutionary character of the Indian bourgeoisie. The growth of the Indian bourgeoisie has been such that they are bound, on the one hand, with reactionary feudal economy, and, on the other, with imperialist trade and finance. Therefore, without hurting their own class interest they cannot lead a revolutionary struggle for the destruction of native reaction and foreign imperialism, which is the programme of national revolution. For these objective reasons, Indian national revolution (overthrow of imperialist domination) cannot be a bourgeois revolution.

The British conquest of India had essentially the significance of bourgeois revolution (Marx).[8] Now the unaccomplished part of the bourgeois revolution takes place in India also under the protection of British imperialism; but in this period of capitalist decline its significance is counter-revolutionary. For example, Stolypin land reform[9] is introduced in India not on the initiative of the native bourgeoisie; it is done by imperialism, often in the face of bourgeois nationalist opposition. To deal with the dangerous situation created by the peasant revolt in the post-war years the British government introduced tenancy reforms in the provinces where the revolt was the most acute. In the province of Bengal the reform could not be carried because of the unanimous nationalist (bourgeois) opposition. It is again imperialism that is approaching (cautiously and superficially) the agrarian problem as an indispensable pre-condition for the capitalist development of the country. The nationalist bourgeoisie has never tackled the problem. As a matter of fact, they are stout defenders of the present system of landownership. In the revolutionary period of 1921–2, the National Congress led by Gandhi, openly supported the landlords in the face of the countrywide peasant revolt. The Swaraj Party repeatedly reassured the landowning classes that it was opposed to any attack upon their position and lauded them as the pillars of Indian culture.

11. The bourgeoisie in a colonial country becomes a revolutionary factor in so far as it initiates and leads the struggle for the creation of conditions for economic progress obstructed by imperialist domination. By adopting the policy of promoting the capitalist development of India British imperialism deprives the nationalist bourgeoisie of its revolutionary role. Under the present conditions the native bourgeoisie grows not as enemy of imperialism; it becomes its ally,

junior partner, protégé. Exploitation of human labour is the basic condition of capitalist development. The new economic policy of British imperialism in India sharpens the class differentiation and ripens the class struggle in the face of which nationalist struggle based upon capitalist antagonism loses its importance. The policy of imperialism in this period of capitalist decline does not cut across the general interests of the bourgeoisie in the advanced colonial countries like India. The antagonism betwen the two ceases to be that between the oppressor and oppressed; it approximates the 'normal' antagonism inherent in the capitalist system. On the other hand, common interests and the common fear of revolution draw them together ever-closer in a united front in the class struggle—to exploit and oppress the working class.

12. Indian bourgeoisie outgrows the state of absolute colonial suppression not as a result of its struggle against imperialism. The process of the gradual 'decolonization' of India is produced by two different factors, namely, 1) post-war crisis of capitalism and 2) the revolutionary awakening of the Indian masses. In order to stabilize its economic basis and strengthen its position in India, British imperialism is obliged to adopt a policy which cannot be put into practice without making certain concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie. These concessions are not conquered by the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie. They are gifts (reluctant, but obligatory) of imperialism. Therefore, the process of 'decolonization' is parallel to the process of 'derevolutionization' of the Indian bourgeoisie.

The influence of the imperialist war and the Russian revolution broadened the social basis of the Indian nationalist movement. It outgrew the narrow limits of the bourgeoisie and intellectual professional classes. It assumed a mass character and mass form. For the first time in its history, in spite of the reactionary bourgeois leadership that still dominated it, it objectively placed before itself the task of overthrowing imperialist domination and of liquidating the social backwardness of the country resulting from it. The bourgeoisie had not contributed to that revolutionization of the nationalist movement. They even did not place themselves at its head post-factum. On the contrary, as soon as the nationalist movement assumed a revolutionary mass character, the big bourgeoisie turned against it and cooperated with imperialism in fighting it. The leadership of the newly revolutionized nationalist movement fell upon the weak and unwilling petty bourgeoisie which debilitated the movement by imposing upon it a reactionary ideology and reformist programme. That revolutionary development of the nationalist movement, which the big bourgeoisie opposed and the petty bourgeoisie dissipated, was the internal factor that caused (rather expedited) the change of the imperialist policy. Therefore, the position yielded by imperialism is a conquest of the masses usurped by the bourgeoisie, as was always the case in bourgeois revolutions.

13. Imperialism is obliged to bribe the Indian bourgeoisie not only to broaden its base in India, not only as the corollary to the policy of increasing colonial plunder by the introduction of changed methods and forms of exploitation to meet the changed world conditions. The collaboration of the Indian bourgeoisie is necessary for the defence of the position of British imperialism in the entire East and in case of the projected war against the USSR.

India cannot be made the military base of British imperialism in the East unless complete support of the native bourgeoisie is assured. Should the Indian bourgeoisie be kept in the pre-war condition of absolute colonial suppression, they would look upon the USSR as an agency of deliverance, as the Chinese bourgeoisie did for a time. In that case they would not help imperialism to combat the penetration into the masses of the influence of the Russian and Chinese revolutions. But the Indian bourgeoisie with a stake in the country—with a perspective of self-aggrandizement under the protection of imperialism—as is the case now, are as afraid of the 'Bolshevik Menace' as their imperialist patrons.

All these factors taken together determine the character of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie. It is no longer a revolutionary force. Not only from the point of view of the internal conditions of India, but from the point of view of the present world conditions also the Indian bourgeoisie is rallied on the side of counter-revolution. It cannot and does not lead or participate in the struggle for national freedom (completely outside the British empire). Indian national revolution has passed its bourgeois stage. It must still realize a programme which, objectively and historically, is the programme of bourgeois revolution; but it is no longer a bourgeois revolution, because it can and will succeed only by breaking the bounds of capitalist society.

14. The readjustment of the relation between British imperialism and Indian bourgeoisie, however, cannot be without hitches. Imperialism naturally seeks to buy the collaboration of the Indian bourgeoisie for the least possible price. The Indian bourgeoisie, on the other hand, desire to have more economic advantages and political rights. Consequently, on the basis of a united front against revolution, there goes on a parliamentary struggle between the two. Then, the contradictory interests of the different sections of the bourgeoisie influence the situation. For example, the interests of the industrial and the trading bourgeoisie clash on the policy of protection. But while the financial group of Bombay are not

altogether opposed to the scheme of a Reserve Bank (of issue) with share-capital, the manufacturing and trading interests unitedly join with the professional classes in their demand that the Reserve Bank should be a state bank.[10] Owing to the unevenness of the level of its development, and owing to the inner contradictions of capitalism, the Indian bourgeoisie as a class cannot collaborate with imperialism always on all questions. Now, one or more sections support or agree with the imperialist policy and the others are in the opposition (parliamentary); and then, vice versa.

Taking advantage of the conflict of sectional interests imperialism splits the nationalist bourgeoisie, politically, thus rendering their parliamentary opposition ineffective. The entire energy of the bourgeoisie is at present concentrated to secure further constitutional reforms which will enable them to carry on the parliamentary struggle for power more effectively. Imperialism, of course, will not yield the monopoly of state power; therefore, on the background of ever closer agreement on the basic economic issues, there will always be a parliamentary struggle. Without overestimating it and always knowing its superficial character, this parliamentary struggle should be used for the development of the revolution. In the next stage of the national revolution the role of the bourgeoisie will be limited to this.

III The Driving Forces and Perspective of the Indian National Revolution

15. The compromise between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie does not weaken the struggle for national freedom. On the contrary, it enters a revolutionary stage. The nationalist bourgeoisie have never been revolutionary. They never fought for national freedom. They always sought for an agreement with imperialism on the basis of economic and political concessions made by the latter. The nationalist movement all along bore the stamp of the reactionary and compromising character of the bourgeoisie. Except in the case of the politically backward and socially reactionary petty bourgeois secret societies, the official programme of the nationalist movement has always been 'constitutional reform' evolving in the post-war revolutionary period to 'Dominion Status inside the British Empire'. The debacle of bourgeois leadership releases the nationalist movement from its reactionary influence and limited political outlook. The programme of the movement reflects the objective demands of the workers, peasants and petty bourgeois masses whose interests cannot be defended and furthered except by completely overthrowing imperialist domination.

16. In the new era of agreement and compromise between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie the economic and political conditions

of these classes will not appreciably improve. On the contrary, they will grow worse. The collaboration (united and anti-revolutionary front) between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie is realized by the former conceding to the latter a large share in the proceeds of the exploitation of the Indian masses. The cooperation of the nationalist bourgeoisie is not secured at the sacrifice of imperialist interests. The share of the native bourgeoisie will be increased by a corresponding increase in the surplus value produced by the Indian working class. The nationalist bourgeoisie frankly declares that for 'national prosperity' the people must make sacrifice. 'We recognize that in the efforts to attain a prominent position in the industrial world, India will have to pay a price. The economic well-being of India, which we aim at in the tariff policy which we recommend, cannot be obtained without making a sacrifice.' (From the Minute of Dissent of the Indian members of the Fiscal commission).

In this new era of protectionism, the consuming public (majority of the population) will be obliged to contribute ever-more for the enrichment of the native bourgeoisie and imperialism deriving benefit from industries thriving behind high tariff walls. The peasantry will be obliged to pay higher prices for agricultural implements, clothing and other manufactured goods. 'Modernization of agriculture' will be realized by creating a class of well-to-do peasants at the expense of the poor peasantry. Agricultural production will be increased, internal market will be extended, by driving the poor peasantry to wage-slavery either on capitalist farms or in factories.

The artisans will be further ruined. The destruction of handicrafts will also ruin the small traders connected with this industry. Extension of banking facilities will bring the rural trade more under the domination of urban capital squeezing the independent small trader out of the run. The urban petty bourgeoisie (poor professional classes, teachers, students, employees, small traders, etc.) will have to bear the burden of heavy indirect taxation in the shape of higher prices and rents. The petty intellectuals in India are completely proletarianized. They are an over-produced commodity thrown in ever-increasing numbers on the glutted market. A proletarianized class can save itself only through a social revolution—by the radical change of the political-economic system that has caused its proletarianization. Industrialization intensifies the exploitation of Indian labour. Since the future of British imperialism considerably depends upon successful harnessing of the cheap labour power of the colonial proletariat for more productive purposes, it will keep the Indian working class on the lowest subsistence level. The native bourgeoisie are a willing party to the violent exploitation and suppression of the working class, because their prosperity also depends on the unpaid labour of the Indian proletariat. Intensified exploitation of the Indian proletariat will cement the alliance between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie.

17. The movement for national freedom, as the political expression of these oppressed and exploited classes (constituting the overwhelming majority of the population), becomes a revolutionary struggle not only against imperialism, but also against its native allies, capitalist and landowning classes. Class-struggle coincides with national struggle. The anti-imperialist struggle will develop and triumph as an anti-capitalist struggle.

The immediate political task of the national revolution still remains to overthrow imperialist rule and establish in its place a national democratic state. But the fact being that the social basis of the national revolution is the oppressed and exploited classes, the democratic state established by it will not be the hypocritical bourgeois democracy. The class-struggle, which is the driving force of the Indian national revolution, is not the struggle between two classes representing two forms of property. Indian nationalist movement in certain stages was a movement dictated by the interests of the bourgeoisie but the Indian national revolution will not be a bourgeois revolution. The motive force of the Indian national revolution is the struggle between the exploiting and exploited classes. Therefore its political task is not to realize parliamentary democracy which is the organ of bourgeois dictatorship.

Being essentially a struggle between exploiting and exploited classes, Indian revolution will be victorious under the leadership of the proletariat. But the revolution will reach the final victory through successive stages of development. The petty bourgeoisie, which participate in the national revolution, are identified with certain forms (decaying) of private property; therefore they will not directly accept the leadership of the proletariat. Neither they, nor the peasantry will accept the programme of proletarian revolution. These classes can be and should be mobilized in a revolutionary struggle for democratic freedom removing their economic grievances, under the hegemony of the proletariat. Democracy is an end in itself for the class (bourgeoisie) which converts the 'democratic' state into an instrument of its dictatorship. For the proletariat it is a means to an end—a step to socialism. The objective programme of the proletariat (socialism) will not be imposed upon the national revolution; but by exercising hegemony in the national revolutionary struggle the proletariat will push it towards democratic freedom higher than bourgeois-parliamentarism.

By virtue of the fact that the Indian national revolution will develop and finally succeed as a struggle against capitalism, the proletariat becomes its driving force. All the other classes oppressed and exploited, fully or partially, directly or indirectly, by capitalism come under the influence of the proletariat. By exposing the counter-revolutionary character of the bourgeoisie; by emphasizing upon the necessity of a revolutionary struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialism; by denouncing the programme of 'equal partnership within the British Empire' as opposed to the interests of the Indian masses; by advocating revolutionary democratic freedom for all the oppressed classes; by putting forward demands to safeguard and further the interests of the peasants and petty bourgeois masses; and by placing itself in the forefront of the entire national revolutionary struggle the proletariat will conquer the leadership of the national revolution.

18. The petty bourgeoisie, particularly the intelligentsia, is an important factor in the Indian nationalist movement. They are not satisfied with the compromising politics of the big bourgeoisie. They generally desire freedom from imperialist domination. Lately, they have repeatedly pleaded before the National Congress the programme of complete independence. Nevertheless the petty bourgeois intellectuals are unable to liberate themselves from capitalist orientation, on the one hand, and reactionary semi-feudal social ideology, on the other. They will still go a long way with the revolution; but will eventually betray as their prototypes did in China. Sinn Feinism, Kemalism, American democracy are their ideals. Even fascism penetrates among them and Mussolini is idealized.

Indian intellectual petty bourgeoisie grew out of the landowning class. The system of land tenure in several provinces of British India is such as to accommodate a whole series (sometimes as many as ten) of rent-receiving middlemen between the owner and the cultivator. The urban petty intelligentsia is closely connected with this class as middle-owners grafted upon the system of feudal–capitalist landownership.

Owing to this intimate relationship with a backward economic system, the petty bourgeois intelligentsia is generally very reactionary in social orientation. Religion, mysticism, Gandhism, etc. have a strong hold upon them. This deprives their political radicalism (desire for complete independence) of practical value. It is usually dissipated in small terrorist societies without political programme and perspective. The political radicalism of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia cannot influence the nationalist movement because there is no social force to back it up. For direct class interests, the petty intelligentsia are hostile to any readjustment of the existing system of landownership, which is the basic objective demand of the peasantry. In this respect they are more reactionary than imperialism.

While judging the relative revolutionary value of the petty bourgeoisie in the national-liberation movement these facts should be taken into consideration. National revolution cannot triumph in India except as an agrarian revolution, nearly 75 per cent of the population being peasants. The class that, by its very existence, is hostile to a radical change of the system of landownership sucking the life-blood of the peasantry, cannot play a very important role in the national revolution. On the contrary, just as in China, the radical petty bourgeois intelligentsia will betray the national revolution as soon as its agrarian character will become sharp.

IV The National Revolutionary Party: Its Programme and Problems

19. The struggle against imperialism and the reactionary politics of the native bourgeoisie (together with the landowning classes) must be carried on with more vigour than ever by the proletariat, peasantry, and the urban petty bourgeoisie. There must be a NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, representing these classes, to lead the national revolution. All the existing nationalist parties are dominated by capitalist and landowning elements. None of them stand upon the platform of national revolution. They are all parliamentary parties not developing any appreciable activity among the masses.

Considerable petty bourgeois elements were in the Swaraj Party. But the Swaraj Party itself is totally discredited. Last year the bourgeois right wing went out of the party and organized a new party frankly with the programme of cooperation with imperialism.[11] Still, the Swaraj Party did not change its bourgeois orientation and remained wedded to the bankrupt tactics of parliamentary opposition. The petty bourgeoisie is completely disillusioned and are leaving the party. The party now exists only as a parliamentary group and election machine. By changing its name to Congress Party last year it captured the lifeless carcass of the National Congress. The petty bourgeois nationalist masses still swear allegiance to the Congress which, however, is not an organized party and is not the same as the Congress (ex-Swaraj) Party.

The petty bourgeois nationalist masses, nominally under the banner of the Congress, have been, of late, giving vent to their opposition to the compromising politics of the bourgeois nationalist parties, including the Swaraj Party. This general opposition has taken organized forms all over the country (Political Sufferers' League, Congress Karmi Sangha, Indian Republican Association, All-India Volunteers' Corps, Indian Republican Army, etc.). None of these more or less revolutionary left-wing nationalist bodies has a clear political programme. They represent the tendency of the petty bourgeois masses to find forms of activities other than the parliamentarism and constitutional agitation advocated by the bourgeois nationalist parties. The revolutionary development of the national movement finds the most mature expression in the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

20. The National Revolutionary Party will not be a party only of the workers and peasants. The petty bourgeois masses (as distinct from the consciously reactionary intelligentsia) must participate in the struggle for national freedom. The proletariat must help them to overcome their reactionary tendencies and push them on the road to national revolution. In spite of their political radicalism, the petty bourgeois masses will not enter the party of the working class. Nor is it desirable that the working class party should be flooded by the petty bourgeois elements (excluding the peasantry). The National Revolutionary party should be the rallying ground for all the classes that still carry on and must carry on the struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialism and the establishment of revolutionary democratic power. These are, primarily, the proletariat, peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.

21. The Workers' and Peasants' Parties (which have now been federated into a national organization) are in reality more petty bourgeois than working class parties. In Bengal, for example, a number of small landlords are to be found among the leaders of the party. The individual members (excepting the communists' trade unions and peasant unions which can enter the party as collective members) are mostly petty bourgeois intellectuals. Nevertheless, the leadership of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties is controlled by the Communists.

This state of affairs stamps the party with a communist colour and the petty bourgeois masses stay away from it. If the Workers' and Peasants' Party is meant to be the Communist Party in a disguised form, then its class character must be clearer—small landlords must be expelled from its leadership; but if it is to become the national revolutionary mass party, it should abandon its working class appearance and it should not be so much identified openly with the Communist Party. Its very name is an obstacle to its development in that direction.

The Workers' and Peasants' Party cannot be the substitute for the Communist Party. As the driving force of the national revolution the proletariat must have its own party; but still there is ample room for a revolutionary nationalist party. The proletariat must enter it and actively participate in its leadership. In the present Indian conditions the proletariat, operating through the Communist Party, must take the initiative to hasten the rise of a national revolutionary mass party.

22. The principal points in the programme of the national revolutionary party are: a) complete overthrow of imperialist domination;

b) establishment of a revolutionary democratic state based upon the oppressed classes (majority of the population); c) liquidation of decayed feudal power embodied in the native states as a support for imperialism; d) agrarian revolution (abolition of landlordism by confiscation without compensation, nationalization of land and complete repudiation of peasants' indebtedness); e) nationalization of public utilities (railways, waterways, telegraphs, etc.), of basic industries (mines, iron, steel), of the tea plantations and of big banks; f) industrialization of the country under the control of the revolutionary democratic state; g) modernization of agriculture through cooperatives, state credit to agriculture; h) freedom of religion and worship; i) guarantee for national minorities; j) close alliance with USSR and other oppressed peoples in the struggle against imperialism.

When the bourgeoisie try to bind the Indian people perpetually to the British empire with the theory of 'equal partnership', the slogan of complete independence must be pressed more energetically than ever. Any class or section that does not fully accept this programme and is not ready to participate actively in the struggle for its realization has no place in the nationalist revolutionary party. It is an illusion that the bourgeois nationalist parties can be induced to accept the programme of complete independence and that of the revolutionary mass action that it implies. Neither will the National Congress accept the programme as long as it is dominated by the bourgeoisie. The National Revolutionary Party should enter the Congress (not the Congress Party) and strive to capture its leadership.[12] Since there are still petty bourgeois elements inside the Congress Party, a left wing opposition should be developed therein with the object of pushing the bourgeoisie in the parliamentary struggle against imperialism and finally to liberate the entire petty bourgeoisie from the domination of capitalist politics. The antagonism between imperialism and native capital should be fully utilized by supporting the national bourgeoisie in the parliamentary struggle against imperialism. But the nationalist bourgeoisie should not be supported when the implication of their struggle against imperialism is the aggrandizement of native capitalism at the expense of the masses (for example, protectionism).

In comparison to the present colonial Indian government, parliamentary democracy is an advanced form of state. Parliamentary democracy is a progressive force when the bourgeoisie is a revolutionary class, because it is the political organ of bourgeois dictatorship. In view of the fact that the Indian bourgeoisie is not a revolutionary class, parliamentary democracy has no place in the political evolution of India. The programme of the national revolution cannot be the establishment of a state which will deliver the political power to the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The revolutionary democratic national state must be controlled by the oppressed majority. It will be a pyramidal structure based upon councils of delegates elected by the organizations of workers, peasants, employees, teachers, students, artisans, small traders, etc., etc. By uniting the legislative and executive functions in the delegates' councils (local, district, provincial and national) a real democratic state-power will be established. The rights of democracy will not remain confined to casting votes periodically. Peoples' representatives will not only make laws, but will have the power and responsibility to enforce them.[13]

Such a system based upon professional and economic interests will eliminate the question of communal (religious and caste) representation. The National Revolutionary Party must condemn the introduction of religion into politics. The reactionary religious prejudices of the petty bourgeoisie must be combated as harmful for the national revolution. Religious beliefs and forms of worship should be mutually respected.

The native states are the stronghold of feudal reaction. As puppets of the British, the native princes are loyal supporters of imperialism. National revolution cannot take place in two-thirds of the country (British provinces) leaving the remaining one-third in feudal backwardness. Therefore the princes are no less hostile to the national revolution than the British. Imperialism plans to mobilize the support of the princes as a check upon the revolutionary movement in the entire country. By creating a federation of native states, imperialism plans to break up India into two parts—in one of which the British will share power with the native bourgeoisie, while in the other it will have the supreme power. Nevertheless, bourgeois nationalism has always kept clear of the native states, which are looked upon as precious remnants of India's past freedom and glory. The bourgeois nationalist parties often defend the absolutism of the native princes as against 'British interference'. The National Congress frankly places the native states outside the pale of its activities. Owing to unbearable feudal oppression, the peasantry in many a native state revolt. The peasant movement is suppressed with brutal ferocity. The national revolutionary party must support the demand of the peasantry in the native states. It must advocate the elimination of these relics of feudal backwardness and absolutism from the face of free India.

The peasantry constitutes nearly 75 per cent of the entire Indian population; therefore the active support of the peasantry will be the determining factor in the struggle against imperialism. The national revolutionary party will not have the support of the peasant masses unless it advocates a radical change in the present land ownership which ruins the peasantry. The British power in India is traditionally based upon the landowning classes. Abolition of landlordism, nationalization of land and ensuring land to the tiller for cultivation will release the revolutionary energy of the peasant masses and will be a blow to imperialism.

The power of the revolutionary democratic national state will not be secure if British imperialism and the native bourgeoisie dominate the economic life of the country through the possession of the means of transportation, basic industries and finance. Therefore these should be brought under democratic control as a result of the national revolution. Large productive concerns, like tea plantations, built up by Indian labour but owned by British capital should be confiscated and become national property.

V The Agrarian Problem

23. National revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is essentially an agrarian revolution. The agrarian problem is the fundamental problem of the Indian revolution. In spite of the fact that, unlike China, India is a modern capitalist state (the League of Nations places India among the eight leading industrial countries of the world), she is overwhelmingly an agrarian land.[14] Agriculture still remains her basic industry. Nearly 75 per cent of her population live on the land. The fundamental task of the revolution taking place in such conditions is to solve the agrarian question. The galvanization of feudal relations, the backwardness of the agricultural industry and the bankruptcy of the peasantry are the results of capitalist (imperialist) exploitation of the generally pre-capitalist modes of production; therefore, the agrarian problem in India cannot be solved inside the limits of capitalist society, as was done by the European bourgeois revolutions. The bourgeoisie 'freed' the serfs from feudal bondage, but they cannot free the peasantry from capitalist exploitation without hurting their own class. Indian national revolution is not a bourgeois revolution, because as such it cannot solve the agrarian question.

24. The agrarian situation is not uniform throughout the country. It varies from province to province. Between large-scale capitalist farming (tea plantations, etc.), on the one extreme, and primitive community ownership, on the other, there exist multifarious forms of landownership. This lifeless stratification has been caused by colonial exploitation which hindered normal social development. (Before the British conquest, India had been for 700 years under the medieval Mussulman imperialism.) The land is overcrowded. Over 75 per cent of the population are engaged in the cultivation of land. Millions of families must earn their livelihood from two acres of land broken into small fragments.

In nearly half of British territories the land is owned by landlords who generally possess more or less feudal character. The landlords pay to the government tax, fixed in perpetuity (as in Bengal) or for a certain period. The landlords' lands are rented out to tenants. Often there are a whole series of non-cultivating middlemen between the landlords and the peasants. In some places the tenancy is fixed subject to increase of rent; in others the landlord can oust the tenant any time. Often nearly half of the peasants' production goes away in the form of rent and feudal dues. In the native states covering one-third of the entire country, the landownership is feudal. Practical serfdom obtains there.

In another half of the British territories the ownership of land is vested in the state which rents out the land directly to the tenants either individually or collectively. The rent is usually as high as 35 per cent of the gross produce. The peasants are not secure on the land. The rent is increased from time to time according to the valuation of the land. The peasants must leave the land if they do not agree to pay the increased rent. In the backward regions (Sind, North-Western Frontier Provinces and partly Punjab) the old village communities, as such, however, have long been disrupted. The village has lost its economic self-sufficiency. Through trade and usury capitalism dominates the economic life of the remotest village.

25. The peasantry is deeply in debt. The total agricultural indebtedness of the country is calculated at about 6,000,000,000 rupees.[15] There are about 240 million peasants (including women and children) in the country. The interest on this debt is not less than 12 per cent on an average. Often the usurer charges as much as 200 per cent. In this situation the majority of the peasantry is practically in debtors' prison. The per capita (including women and children) indebtedness of the peasantry is 25 rupees as against the annual income of 27 rupees. This is bankruptcy. After harvest practically the entire produce of the land and his labour is taken away from the peasant in rent, taxes and interests. He borrows further from the usurer mortgaging the next harvest and his whole life.

This heavy and chronic indebtedness influences agricultural production adversely. The purchasing power of the peasantry sinks lower and lower. In order to check the process British Government has introduced the system of cooperative credit. This only brings the peasantry under a more advanced form of capitalist exploitation.

26. The peasantry is revolting against this unbearable condition. Ever since 1918, agrarian discontent has grown more and more widespread taking violent expressions from time to time. In 1921–2 the country was the scene of actual peasant uprisings. Gandhi's promise to begin a 'no-tax' campaign raised the nationalist movement

immediately to an acutely revolutionary level. The peasant masses flocked under the nationalist banner. When they began to act, they were not only violently suppressed by imperialism, but were betrayed and denounced by the National Congress led by Gandhi.

Imperialist repression supported by the counter-revolutionary attitude of the nationalist bourgeoisie, however, could not liquidate the growing discontent of the peasantry. Sporadic peasant revolts take place every day in some or other part of the country. The situation is so serious that imperialism is forced to introduce some measures of juridical reform which, however, does not affect the situation essentially.

27. The task of the national revolution is to solve the agrarian problem—the basic problem of the country under present conditions. The national revolutionary party must give concrete shape to the objective demands of the peasantry. Only by mobilizing the revolutionary energy of the peasant masses can the national revolution be successful.

The radical solution of the agrarian problem—that is, rescue of the peasantry from the present economic bankruptcy—demands liquidation of the remnants of feudalism and nationalization of land as preconditions. Fighting for the realization of this goal the peasantry must put forward the following demands: a) reduction of rent to 10 per cent of the net production; b) fixity of tenancy; c) abolition of feudal dues; and d) repudiation of the peasants' indebtedness. These partial demands must lead up to the demand for the abolition of landlordism.

The proletariat acting through the Communist Party must lead the peasantry in the struggle for the realization of these demands. The Communist Party must organize the peasant masses in peasants' unions which should become the organs of agrarian revolution. The peasants' unions must be united into a national organization to guarantee concerted action. The peasants' unions should enter the national revolutionary party as collective members. Individual members for the Communist Party should be recruited from the leading elements of the peasants' unions in ever-increasing numbers. Agrarian revolution can take place in India only as a step towards socialism; therefore it must be under communist proletarian leadership. The petty bourgeoisie will go to a certain point; it may or may not go to the end. Unless the leadership of the peasant movement be completely communist, it will be betrayed by the petty bourgeoisie in the revolutionary crisis.

VI The Communist Party and the National Revolution

28. The proletariat is the class which, under Indian conditions, can alone solve the problems of the national revolution. Except under the influence of the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie will not be able to carry on a revolutionary struggle against imperialism so necessary for the salvation of their own class from the present economic bankruptcy and political suppression. Left alone, they would fall victim to reactionary social ideology and would follow the bourgeoisie into the camp of counter-revolution. The basic problem of all problems, the agrarian question, cannot be solved by the bourgeoisie. They are against an agrarian revolution, because the Indian agrarian question cannot be solved within the framework of capitalism. The petty bourgeoisie independently cannot advocate an agrarian revolution because of their relation with a decaying form of landownership. They approach the agrarian question from a reactionary point of view (somewhat like the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries).[16] They advocate resurrection of the village community system which has been long disrupted by capitalist penetration of village economy. Their programme of 'village reconstruction' is utopian. The village is destroyed by capitalism. It cannot be constructed except as a part of socialist economy reared upon the ruins of capitalist system. The slogans for the revival of village communities and village reconstruction are objectively, if not consciously, counter-revolutionary because they defuse the class issues, obstruct the development of class struggle in the village. The peasantry themselves are too backward to be an independent political factor. They either follow the bourgeoisie when these latter struggle against feudalism for the establishment of capitalism; or become an ally of the proletarian leadership. Agrarian discontent can sometimes be diverted in the channel of reformism thereby strengthening the position of capitalism. The present agrarian policy of British imperialism in India tends in this direction. The proletariat, being by its very nature divorced from all forms of property, can alone lead the peasantry in the agrarian revolution.

Thus the relation of class forces places the proletariat in the forefront of the national revolution. The interest of the proletariat demands complete overthrow of imperialism, establishment of a revolutionary democratic state; relentless struggle against the compromising politics of bourgeois nationalism, revolutionary mobilization of the petty bourgeois masses and agrarian revolution. The Indian national revolution can succeed only as an anti-capitalist movement; and an anti-capitalist movement must be led by the proletariat. Reversely, because of the fact that the proletariat is the only class that can radically solve all the problems of the Indian national revolution, this is bound to outgrow the bounds of bourgeois revolution.

29. In order to accomplish this historic task the proletariat must operate through its own party. The Communist Party is an essential factor in the national revolution. It must act as a lever of the whole situation.

The first and foremost task of the Communist Party is to organize and train the proletariat to play its rôle in the national revolution. In spite of the fact that the Indian proletariat is objectively charged with a great political task, it is very young, politically immature and organizationally weak. Labour movement (trade unions) began in India hardly ten years ago. In this short time the proletariat have tasted the bitterness of class struggle. The strike-wave that swept the country in 1919–21, together with the simultaneous agrarian discontent, raised the nationalist movement immediately from impotent bourgeois reformism to the high level of revolutionary mass struggle which would have overthrown imperialist power had it not been sabotaged, misguided and finally betrayed by the petty bourgeoisie. Since then, in many a struggle the proletariat has learnt valuable lessons. The labour movement has been greatly freed from the domination of petty bourgeois nationalist politicians. It is outgrowing the pernicious influence of the apostles of humanitarian social service and mutual help. Trade unions are becoming real proletarian organizations—organs of class struggle. The proletariat will become more class conscious and ready for the revolutionary struggle only under the leadership of the Communist Party.

30. The trade unions are still weak. Only 25 per cent of the workers employed in large factories are organized. The millions and millions of transport workers, plantation coolies and handicraft workers are not yet organized. The 40 millions of land proletariat are entirely untouched as yet. To assume the initiative for the organization not only of 5 millions of industrial proletariat, but of the multitudes of land workers and handicraftsmen is the essential task of the Communist Party. While organizing the unorganized masses, the Communist Party must penetrate the existing trade unions, develop their class character and capture the leadership.

In spite of the revolutionary spirit and fighting capacity of the proletarian masses (as demonstrated in many a big strike and lock-out) the trade unions are largely dominated by reformist theories. As a reaction to the domination of the labour movement by petty bourgeois nationalist politics, 'economism' has gained considerable ground in the Indian labour movement. The theory is that the workers should leave politics alone and organize themselves to improve their economic conditions by collective bargaining and mutual help.

This tendency is encouraged by imperialism, although the native bourgeoisie are generally hostile to trade unionism. Experienced in class struggle, imperialism knows that under proletarian influence the nationalist movement will become revolutionary; therefore it seeks to switch off the young trade unions into the blind-alley of reformism. In this imperialism receives the co-operation of the Indian liberal intellectuals (objectively agents of the bourgeoisie) and of the reformist labour leaders of England.

The Communist Party must resolutely fight against all attempts to corrupt the Indian labour movement with reformism. The bourgeois liberal trade union leaders (Joshi, Chandrika Prasad, Chamanlal, Jhabwala, etc.), working under the influence of the 'labour imperialism' of the British Labour Party, should be exposed and denounced as agents of capitalism which they objectively are.[17] The emissaries of British 'Labour imperialism' coming to India to encourage and promote the growth of reformist labour organizations should be attacked and their sinister motive should be explained to the proletarian masses.

31. Even the disease of parliamentarism is penetrating the Indian labour movement. To tie the proletariat to parliamentarism in a country without parliamentary democracy, would be ridiculous, if it were not a conscious effort to misguide the young proletariat. Reformism in the labour movement is a by-product of capitalist prosperity. There is not much ground for reformists in India. The capitalist development of the country will be realized by exploiting the working class more intensely. Industrialization of India cannot be a means of the stabilization of British capitalism. The economic conditions of the Indian proletariat cannot be improved unless imperialism is completely overthrown. Parliamentary institutions based upon an electorate embracing two per cent of the population cannot be the instrument which can be used even for legislation in favour of the working class. The present economic and political situation is antagonistic to the interests of the working class. This situation can be reformed only at the expense of the working class. Therefore, the task of the working class is not to find a *modus vivendi* in this situation, but to change it radically to make a revolution.

The Communist Party must explain this to the proletariat in popular literature, public meetings, trade unions, clubs, etc. The proletariat can, however, be organized firmly and educated effectively only in actual struggle. The Communist Party must become the leader of the proletarian masses not only by explaining their historic role to them, by combating the reformist theories and by ideological propaganda, but also, and above all, by placing itself at the forefront of the class struggle, by fighting for the everyday demands of the proletariat.

32. In addition to the broad political issues of the national revolution such as overthrow of imperialism, revolutionary democratic state, agrarian revolution, nationalization of mines, railways, heavy industries, etc., the labour movement must be developed in the struggle for the realization of the following immediate demands: a) an eight-hour day; b) minimum wage; c) weekly payment of wages; d) defence of women and child labour; e) advanced social legislation; f) freedom of speech, press and association; g) right to strike. Demands for the protection of handicraft and land-workers should be added.

In the course of the struggle upon these partial demands it will be clear to the proletarian masses that even their elementary grievances cannot be remedied under the present political and economic situation. Thus, the elementary economic struggle of the working class will be developed into a political struggle, class-struggle will be the leaven of the nationalist struggle.

The Communist Party participates in the struggle for national freedom as the conscious vanguard of the proletariat. It must take active part in the development of the national revolutionary party of the proletariat, peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. These forces of the national revolution are ready to be mobilized and led in the fight. The initiative can come and must come only from the proletariat.

VII Immediate Tasks of the Communist Party

33. The basic task of the Communist Party is to organize itself as the political organ of the proletariat closely connected and consciously supported by the toiling masses. The Communist Party will be able to discharge its leading role in the national revolution only when it has accomplished the basic task. The Communist Party will win the confidence of the masses, will become the actual leader of the working class by actively participating in and leading the daily economic struggle of the proletariat and peasantry. Trade unions (already in existence and those to be organized) and peasant unions should be the principal domain of communist activities.

While admitting in its ranks de-classed intellectuals, the Communist Party must be the party of the proletariat, not only in name, but in reality. The majority of the membership must be workers and peasants. The leadership of the party should be proletarianized as much as possible under the present Indian conditions.

34. Ideological development of the leading cadre of the party is an essential necessity. The Communist Party of India must have a thoroughly Marxian leadership in order to resist the penetration of reac-

tionary ideology in the working class. There cannot be a Communist Party without communist theory. Reformism is growing rapidly among the liberal intelligentsia of India. It will corrupt the working class and obstruct the revolution if it is not combatted from the very beginning. The Communist Party must be able to face the native Gandhism and imported Fabianism with scientific Marxism.[18] While it will be tactically inadvisable to attack religion in the beginning, the Communist Party must carry on an ideological struggle against the reactionary theory about the 'spirituality' of Indian culture. India is full of theories idealizing pre-capitalist feudal culture (Gandhism, Tagorism, 'back to the village', etc., etc.). To expose the counter-revolutionary significance of these theories is absolutely essential for quickening the class-consciousness of the proletariat and to further the cultural progress of the entire country.

The Communist Party must build up a party press. The production and circulation of propaganda literature containing Marxian examination of all the aspects of the local situation must be increased. The party press must picture the daily life of the proletariat and peasantry and should express the voice of the working class.

35. The Communist Party must take a leading part in the growth of a national revolutionary party (the Workers' and Peasants' Party). It must bring the workers and peasant masses under the banner of national revolution. The political importance of the petty bourgeoisie must not be underestimated, but the national revolutionary party should not be allowed to drift under petty bourgeois ideology and leadership. The national revolutionary party must be based upon militant action of the masses under proletarian hegemony. Mass agitation must be carried on throughout the country. Mass demonstrations, political strikes, peasant revolts should be organized to back up the programme of the national-revolutionary party, and each partial action—an economic strike in a small industry or the peasant movement in the remotest village—should be connected with the broad political issues: overthrow of imperialism and establishment of revolutionary democratic power. Parliamentary struggle between imperialism and the nationalist bourgeoisie should be utilized to develop mass agitation.

The immediate tasks of the Communist Party of India are; a) to organize itself as the party of the proletariat; b) to capture the leadership and win the confidence of the proletariat and peasant masses by active participation in their daily struggle; c) to enlarge the party numerically by recruiting members from the proletarian and peasant organizations.

Notes

[1] During the years of his youth as an underground revolutionary nationalist M. N. Roy (then Narendra Nath Bhattacharya) had much personal experience of famines in India. Organized voluntary famine relief work was a distinctive part of the programme of Bengal revolutionaries. Besides, he had read the *Report of the Indian Famine Commission of 1880*.

[2] Bengal partition was revoked and the imperial capital removed from Calcutta to Delhi during the viceroyalty of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst (1910–16). There was an unsuccessful assassination attempt on his life in 1912, but he established good relations with the Congress leaders, publicly criticized the South Africa government's 'invidious and unjust laws' against Indians, and was in favour of increasing the number of Indians in the higher government services. He also prepared a blueprint of limited reforms. Hardinge, *My Indian Years*, London, 1948.

[3] The notion of 'capitalist stabilization' was adopted at the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI (21 March–6 April 1925). Eugene Varga spoke at the Plenum on 'the stabilization of capitalism', and it was also stressed by Zinoviev and Manuilsky. Stalin himself wrote on 22 March in *Pravda* that 'there is no doubt that capitalism has succeeded in extricating itself from the slough of the postwar crisis. . . There is no doubt that in the centre of Europe, in Germany, the period of revolutionary upsurge has already ended'. Three weeks after the Plenum the Fourteenth Russian Party Conference adopted a resolution supporting the ECCI view of 'the slowing down of international revolution' and the 'stabilization of capitalism'. This view prevailed in the Comintern until the formulation of the militant policy of 'class against class' at the Ninth Plenum (9–25 February 1928). At the meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in April 1929 and the Tenth Plenum of ECCI (July 1929) Bukharin would be under attack because he did not agree that the phase of stabilization was over or that the world situation was becoming more revolutionary. E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country 1924–6*, Vol. 3; and *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, Vol. 2.

[4] The Indian Fiscal Commission (1921–2) recommended a policy of protection to be applied 'with discrimination' to selected industries. It also recommended the appointment of a Tariff Board 'to investigate the claims of particular industries to protection'. On 10 July 1923 the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution appointing a Tariff Board and adopting a 'policy of discriminating protection' (Resolution of Govt. of India, Deptt. of Commerce, No 378, of 10 July 1923). Between 1923 and 1928 the Board made a number of proposals for protective tariffs and bounties which were adopted by the government. Vera Anstey, *The Economic Development of India*, 1957, Ch. X and XIII.

[5] The Agricultural Commission set up during the viceroyalty of Lord Irwin (1926–31) stressed increased agricultural productivity through improved techniques, implements, marketing, credit, etc., but land and tenancy systems were not included within its terms of reference. Its first result was the appointment of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research. *The Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India*, 1928, Cmd. 3232, includes 16 volumes of evidence. An abridged report was also published.

[6] The Royal Commission (Hilton-Young) on Indian Currency and Finance (1926) strongly recommended the creation of a full-fledged central bank to be called the Reserve Bank of India. The Reserve Bank of India bill was introduced on 25 January 1927, but it had to have three successive versions before it became an Act, and the Bank was formally inaugurated on 1 April 1934. The unconscionable delay was due largely to sharp differences over the demand that the Governnor or the Deputy Governor of the Bank must be an Indian. *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. 2, 1982, pp. 791–2.

[7] The term bourgeoisie (the middle classes) was used by Roy sometimes as a singular noun, sometimes as a plural; this affected the corresponding verb forms and pronouns. The same grammatical uncertainty characterized his use of terms like 'petty bourgeoisie' and 'intelligentsia'. In reproducing the draft we have retained his use.

[8] Marx's view of history was both Eurocentric and global. Marx postulated four major

epochs—ancient, feudal, bourgeois and socialist—each characterized by its own distinctive 'mode of production', and each successive epoch arising dialectically from internal disintegration and structural change (*Aufhebung*) of the preceding system. While the West seemed to him to illustrate this process, Asia baffled him. In a series of articles in the *New York Daily Tribune* between 1853 and 1859 he tried to analyse and interpret contemporary developments, especially in India and, to a lesser extent, China. 'Indian society has no history', he wrote (*NYDT*, 8 August 1853). He thought that the dialectical elements of social change were not built into the Indian social system; consequently an external agent was needed for the overthrow of the unchanging social order. This agent was England. 'Whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about the revolution' (*NYDT*, 25 June 1853). 'England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic Society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.' However, Marx also stated clearly that the Indians would not reap the fruits of modernization till either 'the ruling classes (in Britain) have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat' or 'the Hindoos themselves have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether' (*NYDT*, 8 August 1853).

Later in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx introduced the concept of 'the Asiatic Mode of Production', which was characterized by 'the absence of private property in land' and the central role of governments in 'providing public works', especially artificial irrigation. The Asiatic Mode constituted 'the solid foundation of oriental despotism'. In *Capital*, Vol. III, Marx noted that 'the internal solidity and organization of pre-capitalist modes of production' in India presented formidable obstacles and slowed down the process of *aufhebung*. *Marl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*, edited by Shlomo Avineri, New York, 1969.

[9] On 9 November 1906 a land reform law was introduced in Russia by Prime Minister Stolypin and passed by the Russian Duma which gave 'the right even to a small minority of the peasants of any commune, against the will of the majority, to cut out from the communal land a section to be owned independently'. It was intended to 'encourage the upper circles of the peasantry to get hold of the communal land by buying up the "liberated" sections, and convert these new capitalist farmers into a support for the existing regime'. Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, tr. by Max Eastman, New York, 1959, p. 67.

[10] For details, *Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, 1926*, esp the Minute of Dissent by Sir Purushottam Thakurdas. When the Reserve Bank of India was formally inaugurated in April 1935 it was 'constituted as a private shareholders' institution with a share capital of Rs 5 crores, divided into 5 lakhs fully paid-up shares of Rs 100 each, subject to a maximum dividend of 6 per cent'. Shares of the nominal value of Rs 2.2 lakhs only were allotted to the government of India. The superintendence and direction of the Bank was entrusted to a Central Board of 16 directors of which 8 were elected by shareholders, the other 8 (including the governor and two deputy governors) being nominees of the Governor-General-in-Council. A. G. Chandravarkar, 'Money and Credit 1858–1947', in *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. II.

[11] In February 1926 a section of the Swaraj Party broke away and formed the Responsive Cooperation Party; later in April this group together with others constituted the Indian National Party. The main body of the Swaraj Party was absorbed in the Congress, but in September the Responsivists and such other Congressmen as were opposed to the Swaraj Party formed the Independent Congress Party. N. N. Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, 1926.

[12] In the draft and in his other writings of the period Roy indicated a distinction between the Congress Party which, in his view, was a bourgeois party driven by its class-interest to seek compromise with the British, and the National Congress which was a multiclass body

that had drawn the masses into it and the leadership of which the proposed National Revolutionary Party should try to capture.

[13] The notion of a pyramidal structure as a revolutionary alternative to the parliamentary system was presumably derived from the Soviet model in Russia. The notion was further developed by Roy in the thirties and forties, and with important modifications, incorporated in his theory of radical democracy.

[14] A comparative study (Folke Hilgerdt, *Industrialization and Foreign Trade*) of the rate of growth of manufacturing output in 29 countries including India shows that India's performance during the inter-war period placed her in the fifth position—after the USSR, Japan, Finland and South Africa. Taking 1913 as base year India's annual average for 1926–9 was 146.6 compared to the world average of 138.9, UK's 92.6, Germany's 112.2, the USA's 163.6 and Japan's 289.8. In 1936–8, India's average was 230.4 against the world average of 185.0.

However, India's rate of urbanization continued to be low. In 1921 her urban population as percentage of total population was 10.2; in 1941 it was 12.8. Kingsley Davis, *Population of India and Pakistan*, Princeton University Press, 1951.

[15] M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt* (1925), estimated that in 1921 total rural indebtedness was between 500 and 550 crore rupees. In 1930 it was 900 crores according to the *Indian Central Banking Enquiry Committee Report* (1931).

[16] The Socialist Revolutionary Party was the principal rival of the Bolsheviks in Russia at the time of 1917 revolutions. The SRP idealized the village *mir*, considered the peasantry to be the most important revolutionary force in Russia, rejected Marxism and opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets (June 1917), out of a total of 822 delegates 'the SRP accounted for 285, the Mensheviks for 248 and the Bolsheviks for 105' (E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol. I, 1973, p. 100). Even after the October Revolution, in the newly elected Constituent Assembly the SRP had 410, the Bolsheviks 175 and the Mensheviks 16' (Carr, Ib., p. 120). Once in power, the Bolsheviks began liquidating the SRP, and by 1922 it ceased to be a factor in the Soviet Union. Leonard Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy, Political Opposition in the Soviet State First Phase 1917–1922*, London, 1955.

[17] The All-India Trade Union Congress was founded on 31 October 1920. Its constitution was drafted mainly by Narayan Malhar Joshi (1879–1955), a liberal trade-unionist, and its early leaders included Rai Saheb Chandrika Prasad, Diwan Chaman Lal, S. H. Jhabawala and others, besides Joshi. In 1927 at the 8th Session of the AITUC at Kanpur N. M. Joshi as General Secretary reported that the number of affiliated unions was 59 with a total membership of 125,000. In 1929, however, Joshi left the AITUC in protest against the high-handedness of the Executive Committee. Subsequently, the Communists also split and formed a separate Red Trade Union Congress. P. S. Gupta, *A Short History of the AITUC 1920–47*, New Delhi, 1980.

[18] Fabianism or Fabian Socialism emerged as a distinct movement in the last two decades of the nineteenth century (*Fabian Essays in Socialism*, 1889), and subsequently became quite influential in England. Its best-known exponents were George Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb. Fabianism was imbibed by many England-educated Indians, the most outstanding among them being Jawaharlal Nehru.

Fabianism rejected *laissez-faire* capitalism, but it advocated gradual social control on the means of production and distribution. Gradual socialization as opposed to advocacy of revolutionary upheaval characterized its approach. The term 'fabian' was derived from the Roman General Fabius Maximus Cunctator who deliberately procrastinated in the war against Hannibal. SNR.

SELECTED WORKS

1928

4. Selections from *International Press Correspondence:*
    - Imperialism and Indian Nationalism 8 January
    - Left British Social Democrats as Defenders of Imperialism 12 January
    - The Pan-American Congress 19 January

5. Selections from *The Masses of India:*
    - The Madras Congress January
    - Motilal Nehru Abroad January
    - Constituent Assembly February
    - Constitution or a Programme? March

6. Selections from *International Press Correspondence:*
    - The Indian Constitution 24 August
    - The Indian National Congress 27 December

7. On the Indian Question in the Sixth World Congress

While *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, as the organ of the ECCI started, publication in May 1919 and had Russian, German, English and French editions (see Introductory Editorial Note in *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 259), *Inprekorr* came out in September 1921 and was addressed to a wider readership. The idea was to publish a periodical which would summarize, select and publish 'truthful information on the international labour movement'. This bi-weekly had German, English and French editions—all published from Berlin. The German edition (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*) was generally fuller than the other editions. Roy's first article in *Inprekor*, 'Revolutionary India' (20 December 1921, Vol. I, No. 18), was published under a pseudonym; his first article under his own name came out in the issue of 3 January 1922 (Vol. 2 No. 1) under the title 'The Indian Trade Union Congress'. His last article to appear in *Inprekor* was 'Indian communists in the Election struggle' (1 March 1929, Vol. 9, No. 12). The German edition of *Inprekorr* changed its name to *Rundschau* in 1932 and was moved to Basel. The English edition was replaced by *World News and Views* on 2 July 1938. The Comintern was formally dissolved by a decision of the Presidium of the ECCI on 8 June 1943 and the actual winding up of the affairs of the organs, apparatus, and property of the Communist International was entrusted to a committee composed of some of the most dependable members of the *apparatchiki*, Dimitrov, Manuilsky, Ercoli and Pieck (*World News and Views*, 19 June 1943, Vol. xxiii, 25).

M.N. Roy's organ, *The Masses of India*, succeeded *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* and came out as a monthly from Paris in January 1925. He was almost immediately expelled from France, but *The Masses* continued to be published from Paris till April 1928. Roy had several competent and loyal editorial colleagues stationed in Paris (initially his wife Evelyn looked after the production till she left for the United States). Except for the months in 1927 when he was away in China, Roy fully controlled and guided the editorial policy of the journal although his own headquarters were in Berlin and Moscow with fairly regular movements to other centres like Hamburg, Zurich, Brussels, Luxembourg and Amsterdam. *The Masses* stopped publication after Roy's hurried departure from Moscow to Berlin for medical treatment. It seems that during the short period he could work underground in India (December 1930 to July 1931) he was able to bring out a few issues of *The Masses* from Calcutta. I have not succeeded in tracing any copy of this Indian edition in English, but I have in my possession a photocopy of the German version of two articles from *The Masses* (Bombay) which were published in *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition* (INKOPP) in 1931 (Vol. 2, Nos. 4–5; No. 6), a journal jointly founded and edited by August Thalheimer and M.N. Roy in 1930. Also see editorial note on *The Masses* in *Selected Works of M.N. Roy* Vol. II, p. 339–40.

SNR.

Selections from
International Press Correspondence

Imperialism and Indian Nationalism 5 January
Left British Social Democrats as Defenders of Imperialism 12 January
The Pan-American Congress 19 January

Imperialism and Indian Nationalism*

The annual meeting of the Indian National Congress has passed a resolution declaring complete independence to be its ultimate aim.[1] The practical significance of this resolution is not so great as it may appear on the face of it. Nevertheless, the fact remains that for the first time, since its foundation forty-two years ago, the National Congress has made such a declaration. It is to be read only as the weather signal. Even in the stormiest days of its existence, namely in 1920/22, when the country was in the throes of a powerful mass movement, the National Congress persistently refused to define its object as the attainment of complete independence. The most radical expression of its demand was the Gandhist formula, self-government 'within the Empire if possible and without if necessary' to be attained by 'all legitimate means', and the cult of Gandhism tabooed any action as 'illegitimate' which did not comply with its strict dictum of non-violence. Later on, Das, who replaced Gandhi as the leader of the National Congress, definitely defined Indian nationalist aspiration as 'equal partnership within the British Empire'. In doing so he made the theory that membership of a great federation of free nations was a higher ideal than the isolation of national independence. In view of the fact that the National Congress, in all essentials, still remains wedded to the social conservatism of Gandhi and the political reformism of Das, its declaration as regards independence has no practical value.

Although neither the National Congress nor any of the individual nationalist parties ever declared officially in favour of independence as its goal, there existed an undercurrent in that direction. This was among the petty bourgeois intelligentsia who, however, idealized Gandhi and Das and followed them, although these leaders sternly disapproved of their sentimental extravagance as regards independence and romantic inclination towards futile terrorism. The demand for national independence was never given the form of a political programme by the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. It was not popularized among the masses to gain their support in the struggle for it. A programme of national revolution placed before the National Congress by the communists in 1922 and persistently propagated since then, won but partial approbation of the petty bourgeois nationalists.[2] They sympathized with the demand for independence, but did not have the courage openly to press this demand upon the National Congress; for that would require revolt against their idols, Gandhi and Das. The necessity of armed struggle as the means to national independence, maintained in the programme propagated by the communists, also appealed to their imagination; but they did not agree with the communist exposition of the cult of non-violence as counter-revolutionary, believing in the superiority of the 'spiritual culture' of India which was able to accomplish something different from the experience in the 'materialist West'. They did not understand that armed uprising must be connected with a revolutionary mass movement. As a matter of fact, they entirely disagreed with the communists as regards the social programme of the national revolution. Consequently their demand for independence never entered the realm of practical politics. It could be dealt with summarily by the bourgeois leaders in every annual meeting of the Congress behind the scene.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, no. 1, 5 January 1928, pp. 1–3; signed article by M. N. Roy (Moscow). SNR.

This year the bourgeois directors of the National Congress have allowed the chorus of petty bourgeois intelligentsia to sing out of tune. Considered as an act of the Congress, a feat of bourgeois nationalism, the resolution is a mere stage-show put up with the object of terrorizing the imperialist rulers. Even as such it is naïve; because imperialism cannot be terrorized so easily. A resolution was adopted declaring that independence is the ultimate goal of the National Congress; but not a word is said as regards how this goal will be reached and what will be the nature of the independent national state. Thus it is but an expression of wish. The bourgeois leaders made this much concession to their petty bourgeois followers, because the latter's services are needed in the constitutional game of boycott of the Royal Commission. The boycott will be a very poor show, if it is practised only by those who will be asked to appear before the Commission to express their views as regards the constitutional progress of India. The number of those directly concerned with the work of the Commission does not exceed a couple of thousand—the representatives of the landowning and capitalist classes. A considerable portion of these have declared against boycott. Some of those, who are now talking of boycott, will climb down eventually. So the prospect of boycott, as such, is not very bright. Imperialist rulers know it, and have taken a rather indifferent attitude towards the threatened boycott. For example, a few days before the National Congress formally passed the resolution to boycott the Royal Commission, the British governor of a province, addressing the provincial parliament, advised the nationalists to take a realistic view of the situation and pointed out that the proposed boycott would not hinder the work of the Commission.

On the other hand, past experience leaves the nationalist masses very lukewarm about boycott. The fiasco of the Non-cooperation movement is still fresh in their memory. But to give the boycott the appearance of the expression of a national protest, it is necessary to secure at least some wordy demonstration of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. Besides, if necessary, their services may be utilized to stir up the masses, but to sabotage the movement whenever it will threaten to exceed the desired limit, as was done on the previous occasion. By the resolution of the Madras Congress the bourgeois leaders recover the confidence of their petty bourgeois following, thus obstructing their deviation towards revolutionary alliance with the masses. At the same time, the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, thus saved from revolution, will lend some mass appearance to the boycott by their enthusiastic noisiness. The boycott, however, will fizzle out in a fiasco, as the Non-cooperation, unless it is used as the lever for developing a revolutionary mass struggle against imperialism; but this cannot be expected from the nationalist bourgeoisie, who are not serious even about the boycott.

By the insolent policy of imperialism the bourgeois nationalist parties are placed in a very uncomfortable situation. They must make a show of opposition in order to save their face. Not only the big bourgeois parties of the right, but even the petty bourgeois Swaraj (Congress) Party during the last two years adjusted its activities to prepare 'a favourable atmosphere' for the grant of a further instalment of reform by the early appointment of the Statutory Commission provided for in the Reform Act of 1919. The general policy of bourgeois nationalism was to hold up the olive branch expecting that imperialism would meet it half way. The revolutionary mass movement, which had lent such a potentiality to the boycott of the first reforms seven years ago, was destroyed by a consciously counter-revolutionary policy. Every form of revolutionary activity was discouraged and condemned. Mass agitation was replaced by parliamentary obstruction as the main method of nationalist struggle. Even parliamentary obstruction was gradually abandoned so as to create an atmosphere of peace and goodwill. The revolutionary workers' and peasants' movement was denounced as 'Bolshevik conspiracy'. All these counter-revolutionary preparations were made on the speculation over a further instalment of reform which would save bourgeois nationalism from utter bankruptcy and give to the native bourgeoisie some political rights in addition to the considerable economic concessions already made. But they miscalculated the situation. The policy of imperialism is economic concession, but political suppression. Imperialism can afford to make some economic concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie (it is forced to do so by its internal crisis) only in case it maintains the monopoly of political power. Failure to understand this fundamental principle of imperialist policy created in the Indian bourgeois nationalist movement the illusion of 'equal partnership inside the Empire'. Now it has become brutally clear that the reformist programme of bourgeois nationalism is not realizable. The petty bourgeois Congress (formerly Swaraj) Party, which for several years veiled its programme of compromise with imperialist domination in return for some concessions to native capitalism, in parliamentary obstruction, stands exposed in its native impotence. The resolution of the Madras Congress is only a stratagem to hide this total political bankruptcy.

The crux of the situation lies elsewhere. It is to be found in the remarkable leftward swing of the Trade Union Congress. This has also declared in favour of boycott. In view of the fact that the working class have no direct concern with the Royal Commission, since as a class their views will not be consulted, the decision of the Trade Union Congress has but one implication, namely, that the working class enter the struggle against imperialism as an independent political force. This gives the new boycott movement potentially much more a revolutionary significance than the previous one, when the working class was used by the bourgeoisie as a pawn in the game, and was misled and betrayed by the reactionary petty bourgeoisie. When, six years back, the revolutionary upheaval of the workers' and peasants' masses made the nationalist movement a powerful challenge to imperialist domination and brought it nearly down (the bourgeois nationalist leaders themselves testify to this), there did not exist in the country a revolutionary political party to lead that upheaval. Today the situation has changed essentially if not entirely. The appearance of the working class as an independent political factor in the present critical situation is due to the fact that they have found their own party which leads them for the promotion of their class interests. Apart from the Communist Party, which could develop but slowly owing to imperialist terror aided and abetted by the hatred and hostility of the nationalist bourgeoisie, there has come into existence the Workers' and Peasants' Party. The activities of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and the revolutionary consciousness created thereby among the masses have pushed the Trade Union Congress to the left and have contributed largely to the resolution of the Madras National Congress.

Nearly a year before the petty bourgeois left wing of the National Congress could have the courage to express its desire for independence, the Workers' and Peasants' Party had placed before the country a comprehensive programme of national revolution. Its representatives on the Congress Executive repeatedly brought this programme for adoption by the Congress, only to be rejected. It is again the Workers' and Peasants' Party and the Communists who from the very beginning pointed out the insufficiency of the slogan of boycott, and proposed that this negative slogan must be supplemented by positive demands. They have begun the agitation for the election of a Constituent Assembly which should decide the political future of India.[3] If the National Congress and the individual bourgeois parties accept this proposal, a very broad anti-imperialist front will be created and the boycott will not fizzle out as on the previous occasion, but will be the lever to develop a mighty mass movement to realize the desire expressed in the Madras Congress. But there is sufficient reason to doubt that the bourgeoisie will participate in such a revolutionary struggle. Even the petty bourgeois intelligentsia cannot be fully relied upon. Apart from the lessons of the past, the statements made by bourgeois nationalist leaders inside and outside the country warrant such doubt. For example, the Congress leader, Motilal Nehru (who, by the way, stayed away from this year's session obviously in order not to commit himself one way or the other) appeared before the General Council of the League against Imperialism held in Brussels on 9–11 Dec. to express bitter disappointment at the behaviour of the British Labour Party. But at the same time, to disassociate himself from any possible revolutionary significance of his action, he took great care to explain that he did not belong to that section of the Nationalist movement which desired separation from the British Empire. When at the end of the same month, on the motion of his son, the National Congress declared independence as its goal, the old Nehru sat in England looking out for an opening to begin negotiation with Birkenhead with the object of tiding over the crisis. Whenever such an opening will be available he will tell British imperialism: 'don't take the young chaps at home seriously, I will know how to manage them'.

But the real struggle is not held up by the compromise-seeking bourgeois politicians. The workers have begun it. The Municipal Workers' Union of Bombay (where the Royal Commission will first touch Indian soil) has decided to strike on the day of the Commission's arrival. The British authorities instantly challenged the legality of the strike, but in remarkable contrast to previous experience, the head of the Union, who belongs to the Workers' and Peasants' Party, declared that the workers would strike disregarding the threat of dismissal and prosecution. Very likely the harbour workers and eventually the railwaymen will follow the lead, beginning a real struggle in spite of the counter-revolutionary bourgeois nationalist parties.

Notes

[1] At the Madras Session of the Indian National Congress (December 1927), presided over by Dr M.A. Ansari, the following resolution was moved by Jawaharlal Nehru: 'This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete national independence.' (*Indian Quarterly Register*, 1927, II, p.380.) The resolution was passed, but in moving it Nehru explained that 'this resolution does not change the present creed of the Congress . . . it leaves the doors of the Congress open to such persons as may be satisfied with a lesser goal'. In his official *History of the Indian National Congress 1885–1935*, B. Pattavi Sitaramayya noted that 'Gandhi was absent from the Committee at the time and heard of it after it had been passed' (p.541). A year later at the Calcutta Congress, presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru, a resolution was passed accepting the objective of Dominion Status as recommended by the All-Parties' Committee Report. The resolution was moved by Gandhi.

[2] 'A programme for the Indian National Congress' was published in *The Advance-Guard* on 1 December 1922 and issued as a separate leaflet and distributed at the Gaya Congress. For the text of the programme and other details see *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Vol I, pp.452–9.

[3] Workers' and Peasants' Parties had already been formed in Bengal and Bombay. A 'Manifesto of the Workers' and Peasants' Party to the Indian National Congress' was issued and distributed at the Madras session. It was based on Roy's programme and echoed Roy's idea that 'a national Constituent Assembly, guaranteeing complete national independence and the democratization of national life in every respect must be the main plank of the Congress platform.

SNR.

Left British Social Democrats as Defenders of Imperialism.*

In the 30 December issue of *The New Leader* Mr Brailsford makes a review of the past 'Year of Perils and Escapes'. Of course he could not do it without touching the Chinese question. After a very cursory and remarkably detached review of last year's events in China he gets terrified by 'an Asiatic problem and a continental struggle against imperialism which may involve India'. The 'escape' from this 'peril' he finds in 'a rare degree of liberal foresight'! So, out of the capitalist ruins and danger of imperialist war the world can only be saved not by Socialism, but by liberalism. This is the remedy prescribed by the 'left wing' of the political Labour movement.

How does Mr Brailsford, who calls himself a Socialist and passes as a 'left winger', arrive at such a flagrantly unsocialist, nay anti-socialist, conclusion? He is driven to this conclusion by the fear of Socialism: by the fear that the oppressed peoples of the East will be completely convinced that their only friend is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Mr Brailsford invokes, with evident pessimism, a liberal policy 'in China and in India alike which will assure their awakening masses that there is hope for them in quarters other than Russia, and in measures less violent than revolutionary'.

The world is unavoidably heading towards Socialism and the road leads through revolution. This is the consequence of capitalism. But the 'socialist' Brailsford refuses to see the inexorable logic of events and becomes a wise counsellor of imperialism in distress. The world is in revolt against capitalism. The Russian Revolution as well as the anti-imperialist movement in the colonies are the expressions of this revolt. The place where the revolt has been successful naturally becomes the standard to which the eyes of all rebels turn. Mr Brailsford advises the imperialist rulers to adopt a liberal policy in order to break this revolutionary unity brought about by community of interests.

'The hope of the awakening masses' of India and China, indeed of all the subject countries, is to be free from imperialist domination as a step towards the liberation from capitalist exploitation. Does Mr Brailsford maintain that this hope can be realized without breaking the bonds of imperialism? Does he maintain that even the elementary conditions for the realization of this hope can be created under the benign protection of imperialism? No policy of imperialism, however liberalized, can allow the realization of this hope. Imperialism and the aspirations of the peoples it oppresses are irreconcilably antagonistic. Obviously Mr Brailsford has a different notion as regards what he calls the hope of the colonial oppressed masses. He did not say what it is. But judging from the trend of his arguments one could gather that in his opinion the hope of the colonial peoples is not, rather should not, be national and social freedom. In that case they could secure the patronage of the liberal apologists of imperialism. But even this is not possible, as has been proved by the recent refusal of the British labour leaders to support even the very modest hope of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie. This Mr Brailsford himself admits when he deplores that 'the decision over the Indian Commission does not encourage optimism'. So it has become clear that no other policy than that of revolutionary Socialism can help the oppressed peoples realize their hope. Nevertheless, Mr Brailsford's faith in liberalism is pathetically incorrigible. If it were only Mr Brailsford's inability to grasp the situation, he could be left alone in his faith in liberalism and pacifism. But the case is more serious. He is worried about the perilous position of imperialism and is anxious to show it a way out. The 'escape' he suggests is futile. He is himself conscious of it. Nevertheless, it is significant that he is so concerned about the future of imperialism. Imperialism would not accept the advice of its Social Democratic apologists. It refuses to follow any other policy in the colonies than that of the iron hand. In this situation Social Democratic Liberalism stands completely exposed in its native character: it supports unconditionally imperialist absolutism in the colonies. Mr Brailsford's party has done it shamelessly in connection with the Indian Commission; and Mr Brailsford, together with the other 'left-wingers' of his brand, are no better than MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas and Co. The theory he makes in the article under review deprives him of any distinction from those who have frankly abandoned Socialism and have openly united with imperialism against the oppressed peoples.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, 12 Jan. 1928, pp. 44–5, signed article by M. N. Roy (Moscow). SNR.

The theory he makes is that a 'muddled' policy has driven the peoples of the East, particularly of India and China, to look towards the USSR as their only friend and to the conclusion that the way to freedom lies through revolution. The deduction from this is that an alliance of the oppressed peoples of the East with the USSR is dangerous and that a revolution in the colonies should be prevented by all means. This is exactly what imperialism also desires. As a result of prolonged and devious intrigues imperialism has succeeded in having the nationalist bourgeoisie of China violently betray their alliance with the USSR. But they betrayed their alliance with the USSR after they had betrayed the national revolution. The masses of China, who in the teeth of bloodiest terror, are heroically defending the revolution, remain convinced that the USSR is their only friend in the bitter struggle against imperialism and native reaction. The remarkable failure of the Social Democrats to move a finger against the terror confirms them in this conviction. In spite of everything, for imperialism. China is a lost cause. Mr Brailsford admits it lamentably, and he warns that India will go the same way, unless imperialism changes its 'muddled' policy for a sane policy of liberalism. But it is too late. The disease is too serious to be cured by Mr Brailsford's remedy. The future of imperialism depends upon the bloody suppression of the colonial revolt. The 'muddled' policy is the result of the inner contradictions of imperialism. In the fierce clash of world conflicts Social Democratic liberalism has gone totally bankrupt. On every acute question the thin veil of radicalism drops from the face of the 'left wing', exposing its true complexion.[1]

Note

[1] H. N. Brailsford was 'a humane British Labourite' who consistently pleaded for a liberal British policy towards India. He was an admirer of Gandhi, wrote several books and pamphlets (*Property or Peace?* ; *Subject India*), visited India, sent sympathetic accounts of the Civil Disobedience Movement in *The Manchester Guardian*, and wrote jointly with H. S. L. Polak and Lord Pethick Lawrence *Mahatma Gandhi* (Odhams Press, London, 1942) with a foreword by Sarojini Naidu. SNR.

The Pan-American Congress*

The American government will not permit the Monroe Doctrine to be touched by any treaty of arbitration that may eventually be contracted between the Powers.[1] The reservation has been made in the proposal presented by Kellog to Briand for a multilateral treaty among the powers, the preamble of which will be a declaration outlawing war. The significance of this reservation is that the United States considers Latin America as its colony and demands that the European powers docilely recognize this as a *fait accompli*. There was a time, up to the middle of the Nineteenth Century, when the European powers—France, England, Austria, Spain—disputed the pretension of the United States 'to protect the republican system in the New World against the aggression from the Old'. Those days are gone. The hegemony of the United States over Latin America is now tacitly recognized, although competition for economic and financial influence and political intrigues are never suspended. None of the European Powers, however, would now displease the rich Uncle Sam by openly disapproving his bullying methods of managing his southern neighbours. Otherwise, it might have been demanded by the European powers, who do not very much relish the recurring 'peace-proposals' from Washington, that the war of open aggression against Nicaragua cease before any such proposal could receive serious consideration.

Uncle Sam has really beaten the other imperialist governments in bourgeois hypocrisy. In his own parlance, he has 'some nerve' to talk superciliously of peace while cynically bombing the people of Nicaragua and planning to build 50 more battleships costing 800 million dollars. Whatever may be the attitude of Europe to American imperialism, Latin American resistance to it grows steadily. It is remarkable how even little Nicaragua has one uprising a few months after the other has been so brutally crushed. But the latest and the most unexpected resistance comes from Argentina. Being the farthest away from the United States the Argentine Republic has all along been rather lukewarm towards the anti-American sentiment generally prevalent throughout Latin America. While Uncle Sam was busy in putting the smaller republics bordering the Caribbean Sea and the

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 19 January 1928; pp. 73–4; signed article by M. N. Roy (Moscow). SNR.

Panama Canal Zone into order, the far-off Argentine developed into a full-fledged modern bourgeois State without much interference from the north, and in closer economic connection with Europe. Until the war British capital was predominant in Argentina and her trade with Europe was much greater than that with the United States. During the war Wall Street gained much ground; but obviously Argentina had passed that stage of political minority which might be a pretext of foreign intervention in her internal affairs. This being the case, there was no cause of open conflict between Argentina and the United States. The Argentinian bourgeoisie, which since the war is as much connected with New York as with London, did not care to displease Washington by mixing up in its quarrels with other Latin American republics.

On the eve of the Pan-American Congress, which meets at Havana on 15 January a powerful anti-American agitation has broken out in Argentina. Under the pressure of this campaign the government has been forced to consider what attitude its delegation to the Pan-American Congress should take in case the Nicaraguan question were excluded from the agenda as it is likely to be on the dictation of the United States delegation. The decision of the government is not yet known; but it is of significance and importance that the Argentinian government has abandoned its indifference to the situation of Nicaragua, an indifference which was a few days ago emphasized in Berlin by its Foreign Minister. The entire Argentinian press carries on, as the correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* reports, ‘a campaign against American imperialism with bitterness hitherto unusual here’. For example, the leading bourgeois daily *La Prensa* writes:

> It cannot be allowed that our delegation to Havana keeps quiet (on the Nicaraguan question). It must either express its opinion or withdraw from the Congress. The public opinion of Argentina cannot suffer its delegation to play the chorus girl in Havana. Before any other business the delegations from the [Latin] American Republics must demand immediate cessation of the aggression against peace that the American troops carry on in Nicaragua. While Nicaragua is attacked there can be neither alliance nor entente. While a country is occupied by foreign troops there cannot be any confidence in the speeches and declarations about continental solidarity.

It is doubtful that the American delegation, which is led by the Wall Street spokesman Hughes and the Standard Oil Co. man Fletcher (formerly Ambassador to Mexico), will have a plain sailing in Havana. It is very disagreeable for American imperialism that in the eleventh hour resistance should come from such an unexpected quarter in the Congress which will be attended by President Coolidge himself. By her political solidity and economic development

Argentina is recognized as the premier republic of Latin America. An opposition to American imperialism led by her will be supported by other Latin American governments thus putting the question of a Latin American Alliance in the realm of practical politics.

Mexico, which owing to close proximity bears the brunt of American imperialist aggression, has always been the champion of a Latin American alliance against the United States. But it always lacked the power and prestige to command the adhesion of all the other republics to its strivings.[2] Owing to the lack of this general support, the government of Calles recently capitulated to American demands after a resistance of several years.[3] Indeed, the struggle between Mexico and Washington over the Mexican Oil Law dates from 1917 when after the overthrow of the Wall Street protégé Victoriano Huerta from the presidency, a new Constitution was adopted embodying the principles of the revolution of 1911.[4] The article 27 of the new Constitution has ever since been the bone of contention. By this article all sub-soil riches were declared to be property of the nation. The meaning of the article was nationalization of petroleum and other mineral deposits which had all been leased out to foreign capitalists, particularly American and English, by the Diaz government. That act of the Mexican government, of course, was met with undying hostility of the imperialist powers who refused to recognize the Carranza government until the article 27 was removed from the Constitution. A reactionary in internal questions, Carranza stubbornly refused to abide by the wishes of the foreign powers, and for the first time sought to unite all the Latin American republics in a common resistance to the northern giant. Failing to bring the Carranza government to terms by open armed interventions, American imperialism fell back upon the effective method of fomenting civil war. Obregon, who with the help of the United States overthrew Carranza in 1920, for four years carried on a policy which was calculated not to annoy the powerful northern neighbour. In 1924 the United States tried to prevent the election to the Mexican presidency of Calles who was then notorious for his radical inclination. But supported by the workers and peasants, Obregon defeated the rebellion of the American nominee de la Huerta and secured the election of his candidate, Calles.

The struggle over the Oil Law revived. To break the deadlock on the petroleum question, which deprived the Mexican government of a rich financial resource, the Calles government amended the article 27 of the Constitution of 1917 making the law not retroactive. It was provided that oil leases granted before 1917 could be renewed for not more than 50 years on the application of the leaseholders. Even this did not satisfy the oil kings who wanted the renewed lease to be perpetual which would render the disputed article 27 practically null and void. At last on the eve of his exit from office Calles has given in. American imperialism has triumphed and the Pan-American Congress in Havana is to be staged as a demonstration of American hegemony over the New World. This is the first time that all the Latin American Republics will be represented at the Pan-American Congress. But in the eleventh hour comes the note of discord from Argentina, which is sure to crystallize the resentment of the little republics coerced by the Washington policy of 'big stick', in a united Latin American opposition to the imperialism of the United States.[5]

For obvious reasons, the United States government does not desire that the Nicaraguan question is discussed in the Pan-American Congress. To have the Congress leave the Nicaraguan question alone would mean that Uncle Sam's right to do whatever he pleases in the New World is indisputable. His supremacy is recognized by the very States over which he seeks to rule supreme. A part of the recent capitulation of Calles was that he very likely agreed that the Mexican delegation to the Congress would not raise the Nicaraguan question. Now, the attitude of Argentina may influence the policy of the Mexican delegation. The Calles government has all along been accused by Washington of helping the Nicaraguan rebels. Undoubtedly, there exists in Mexico a widespread sympathy for the Nicaraguan people fighting against American imperialism. Therefore the Mexican delegation will be obliged to support any move to raise the Nicaraguan question. Thus the Havana Congress, which is staged as the demonstration of American supremacy, may turn out to be a scene of Uncle Sam's defeat.

Notes

[1] The Monroe Doctrine was formulated in 1823 to prohibit any kind of intervention by the Powers of the Old World in the affairs of the New World. President Thomas Monroe proclaimed that the American continents were 'henceforth not to be considered as subject to further colonization by any European Powers'. During his years in Mexico Roy had contributed a series of articles to the local journal *El Heraldo de Mexico*, critically examining 'the origin of the Monroe Doctrine and its development in practice during nearly a hundred years' (*M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, 1964, pp. 124–5). Later he also published the series in the form of a small book under the title *El Camino para la Paz duradera del Mundo* (1918). Roy also proposed to President Venustiano Carranza the formation of a Latin American League to counteract the intervention of the USA in Central and South America. However, after he joined the Comintern he was much too occupied with the revolutionary movements in Asia to maintain his Latin American contacts. Rodrigo Garcia Trevino mistakenly stated in *La Ingerencia Rusa en Mexico Y Sudamerica* (Mexico, 1959) that Roy was sent back to Mexico as a Comintern agent, and this was repeated by Salvador de Madariaga in *Latin America between the Eagle and the Bear* (London, 1962), but there is absolutely no evidence to

support this claim. The persons sent, in fact, to Mexico after the Second Comintern Congress were the Japanese Katayama and the Americans Louis Fraina and Charles Philips. *See* Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, New York, 1957; and Manuel Gomez, 'From Mexico to Moscow', *Survey*, October 1964.

[2] For Mexican–US relation and conflicts J.E. de dos Reyes, *Relaciones economicas entre Mexico y los Estados Unidos 1870–1910*, Mexico, 1951; M. S. Alperovich and B.T. Rudenko, *La Revolucion Mexicana de 1910–1917 y la politica de los Estados Unidos*, Mexico, 1960; C.W. Hacket, *The Mexican Revolution and the United States*, Boston, 1926; H. F. Cline, *The United States and Mexico*, Harvard, 1953.

[3] Plutarco Calles succeeded General Alvaro Obregon as President of the Mexican Republic. Roy knew Calles in Mexico, and met him later in Europe. For details of Huerta, Calles, Obregon, etc. H.B. Parkes, *A History of Mexico*, London, 1962; C. C. Cumberland, *Mexico the Struggle for Modernity*, New York, 1968.

[4] The Queretaro Constitution of 1917 which confirmed Carranza as President of the Mexican Republic had several very radical features. Articles 3, 31 and 130 committed the Republic to a secular system of education and abolished nearly all privileges and special powers of the church. Article 27 (the lengthiest in the Constitution) prohibited church ownership of real estate except for strictly religious purposes; voided all previously granted concessions to foreign governments and investors for the exploitation of Mexico's natural resources; established state control over water and underground wealth; and provided for the liquidation of the *latifundia* and redistribution of land among the actual cultivators. Article 123 gave protection to wage earners and declared the principle of minimum wages. The implementation of the Constitution was, of course, bitterly resisted by the church, by land-owners and by foreign owners of mines, ranches and oil-fields, and the following decades were a period of long struggle to make the constitution a reality. Besides Parkes and Cumberland cited in note 3, see Ronald Atkins, *Revolution: Mexico 1910–1920*, London, 1969; Anita Brenner, *The Wind that Swept Mexico: the History of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1942)*, New York, 1943.

[5] In January 1927 the Executive Committee of the Communist International passed a resolution protesting against the armed occupation of Nicaragua by the United States which wanted to cut a canal through that country and bring it into subjugation. There was a popular uprising against the US-backed regime of Diaz. The US Secretary of State Kellog justified military intervention on the ground that the Nicaraguan upheaval was inspired by the Bolsheviks.

In 1925 the ECCI had set up a South American Secretariat with headquarters at Buenos Aires. The Secretary of the Argentine Communist Party, Penelon, represented Latin America at the Fifth Comintern Congress and was elected a member of the ECCI. By the time of the Sixth Congress the ECCI included among its members representatives of the Communist Parties of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Chile, Cuba, Colombia and Ecuador. *Protokoll: Funfter Kongress*; and *Protokoll des 6 Weltkongresses*. For a general account, Rollie E. Poppino, *International Communism in Latin America, A History of the Movement 1917–1963*, New York, 1964. SNR.

Selections from

The Masses of India

The Madras Congress	January
Motilal Nehru Abroad	January
Constituent Assembly	February
Constitution or a Programme?	March

The Madras Congress*

The Madras Congress has become conspicuous not because it passed a resolution of boycott of the Simon Commission, for that has been done even by the liberals; nor because it emphasized the necessity of inter-communal unity, but because it adopted the resolution of complete national independence for India and also condemned Great Britain's militarist aggression against Russia.

The adoption of the resolution of complete national independence is a unique event in the history of the Congress. The same resolution has met with persistent defeat during several years past. Even during the stormy days of non-cooperation, the dictator of the movement the Mahatma refused to define Swaraj as complete independence. The adoption of the resolution now shows firstly that the Indian bourgeoisie is so indignant at 'the gratuitous insult' offered by British imperialists that it has been obliged to make this gesture of parting company with them; secondly that the left movement led by middle class intellectuals is gaining ground.

The news agencies have not told the outside world what steps the Congress has proposed to take to reach its new goal. Naturally the only effective step, as also forecast by the nationalist press (*Forward*, 7 Dec.) would be to launch a mass movement in the country. In that case the Congress would be giving a fitting reply to the insolent challenge put forward by British Imperialism. On the other hand, we are told by Reuter that the resolution of complete independence 'was accompanied with the condition that it did not involve any change in the Congress creed regarding Swaraj'. The Congress creed requires 'the obtainment of Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means'. It would appear from this that the Congress leaders felt that by not adopting the resolution of complete independence they were committing themselves to means other than 'peaceful and legitimate'. Judging from the past history of the Congress the peaceful and legitimate means do not exclude 'mass civil disobedience' and non-payment of taxes, and some leaders were at the eve of the Congress actually talking of adopting these two means. Short of armed revolt these two weapons are most effective and revolutionary at the same time. If the Congress leaders by putting the condition of having their creed intact meant to exclude only the armed revolt and resolved to launch a mass movement including as its ultimate stages mass civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes, the creed can remain unaltered without doing any immediate harm to the country. But the history of bourgeois nationalism does not inspire one with the hope that the Congress would take these steps of direct action. If by some miracle the Congress adopt this course the world would have the occasion of witnessing another Bardoli—the class interests of the Indian bourgeoisie would be served and saved from the rising tide of peasantry and workers on the excuse of 'peaceful and legitimate means'. And precisely this is the significance of saving the idol of the 'creed'.

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* *The Masses of India* Vol. IV, No. 1, January 1928, pp. 1–3; published from the front page as editorial notes under the general heading: 'Point of View of the Masses'. SNR.

If a report published in the *Daily Herald* to the effect that the adoption of the independence resolution 'is a moral gesture to the world and real opinion favours self-government on a Dominion basis' be true, the empty gesture would fail to overawe Birkenhead and his imperialist band.

By condemning Britain's aggressive preparations against the USSR and supporting the League against Imperialism the Congress has taken cognizance of its right place amongst the anti-imperialist bodies.[1] It has gone a step further in this direction by 'urging the British Government to put an end to any war preparations in India and the Eastern Seas' and demanding the recall of Indian troops from China, Iraq and other Eastern countries. These protests and demands are however not of much avail unless they are backed by mass action.

The Left Wing

The left wing of the Congress composed mainly of middle class intellectuals are destined to play in the near future a prominent role in the nationalist movement. After having been encouraged on the adoption of the resolution of complete national independence put forward by them they must be in a mood to put up some real show. From the pronouncements and writings of some of the individuals of this group one can say with more or less certainty which course their politics will take. These gentlemen claim to be neither bourgeois nor socialist, but nationalists standing for the cause of the whole nation. They are as much opposed to class struggle as any capitalist or imperialist. It is doubtful indeed whether their theories of class collaboration and national unity will enable them to muster around them a real mass force. Sentimental nationalism even when it stands for complete independence and republicanism cannot appeal to the workers and peasants who are confronted every day with class-struggle. A concrete cause for which they will readily fight is their economic and political rights which involves struggle against oppressive landlordism and capitalism, which struggle the so-called leftists refuse to recognize. Even if they succeeded in gathering some mass force around them they would not go very far with the movement as they would prefer finishing it rather than allow the class conflict to develop which is a natural consequence of a mass movement. The real leftists and anti-imperialist elements would however join the Workers' and Peasants' Party which has shown in its programme the understanding of the situation.

As an indication of the future activities of the pseudo-leftists one can point out the recent U.P. Kisan and Labour Conference held under the presidentship of one Sri Krishna Dutt Pallival who is supposed to be a left congressist.[2] In his presidential address Mr Pallival pointed out that 'next to the problem of Swaraj the problem of Kisans and labourers in India was the most important one'. It is to be noted that according to the said gentleman the problem of Swaraj is different from and comes before that of the masses. The president further said that their movement was, 'neither anti-Zemindars nor anti-government but was started with the sole object of safeguarding the interests of the kisans'. This is to say that the interests of the Kisans are in no way antagonistic to those of the landlords and the Government, which is wrong on the very face of it. The UP Kisan and Labour Conference resolved to establish Kisan and Labour Sabhas in every village 'for proper organization of Kisans'. The 'proper organization' seems to be meant more to ward off class war than to safeguard the interests of the peasants. This view is borne out by the protest made in the conference by one Pandaya who declared that 'there was some awakening among the kisans and to stifle this awakening some Zemindars had come in (the) pose of their leaders and were trying to organize Kisans in their own interests. In the Conference itself there was hardly a Kisan.'

Labour Programme

In his presidential address to the Trade Union Congress Mr Chaman Lal mentioned the broad outlines of the programme of the Indian labour movement.[3] He summarized the demands of the Indian working class as *nationalization of industries and workers' government*. If the Trade Union Congress and its leaders have really arrived at the understanding that these are the demands of the Indian working class and are prepared to conduct the revolutionary struggle for the realization of this programme, then they deserve hearty congratulation and fullest support from the working class. But we are inclined to doubt whether Mr Chaman Lal appreciated the full implication of his statement. This doubt of ours is caused by the perfunctory manner in which this the most vital question was touched at the end of the speech. Nevertheless, the very fact that the president of the Trade Union Congress even went to the extent of touching the question is very significant. It indicates the current of the situation. The Indian working class is no longer the 'inarticulate masses' to be 'protected and patronized' by the foreign imperialists or the native bourgeoisie. They are becoming conscious of their own interests and ready to fight for these interests. The president of the Trade Union Congress has given expression to this growing class consciousness of the masses, probably without knowing what he was doing.

The demand for nationalization of industries and workers' government, if it is seriously meant, commits the Trade Union Congress to the programme of Socialism, and not the Socialism of the Second International, but to *revolutionary Marxian Socialism*, that is, *Communism*. The programme of revolutionary Socialism, that is, abolition of private property and the class-ridden society resulting therefrom, is the programme of the labour movement. But the way to the realization of this programme lies through revolutionary struggle which, in present Indian conditions, must have for its immediate task the overthrow of imperialism, complete liquidation of the remains of feudal reaction and revolutionary democratization of the country. Indian proletariat have been carrying on this struggle for a number of years. They are becoming more and more conscious every day that they are called upon to be the leader of this revolutionary struggle. On the other hand, imperialism knows that its bitterest and most potential enemy is the proletariat; therefore it is so deadly hostile to the communists and their propaganda, because the proletariat can and will overthrow imperialism only under the leadership of the communists. To check communist propaganda and to hunt the communists is necessary to obstruct the revolutionary development of the labour movement. When it is remembered that Mr. Chaman Lal has always been hostile to the communists whom he has denounced as 'Bolshevik agents' taking his cue from the British government, the sincerity of his conversion to communism can be doubted. Further, *nationalization of industries and workers' government* are not compatible with the programme of the bourgeois nationalist Congress (Swaraj) Party to which Mr Chaman Lal belongs. The programme of this party militates against the interests of workers and peasants. In practice this party always defends feudal and capitalist interests as against the workers and peasants. Committed to the 'high ideal' of self-government within the British empire, this party is against a revolutionary struggle for national freedom. Finally, this party fully shares the imperialist viewpoint as regards the danger of communism and stoops to the meanest intrigues to fight against the communists. Two years ago, while in England, Mr Chaman Lal declared that the Swaraj Party was the only party in India that defended the interests of the working class. Mr Chaman Lal must in actual deed wipe out these damaging traditions of his political career, before one could believe that he understood and meant what he casually mentioned in his speech. But in spite of himself he has shown which way the wind blows.

Notes

[1] The League against Imperialism (originally called the League of Oppressed Peoples) was organized in February 1926. Its formal first Congress took place in Brussels from 10 to 15 February 1927, the main organizer being Willi Muenzenberg. Jawaharlal Nehru who was in Europe attended the Congress as the representative of the Indian National Congress; he was elected to the Presidium and the Executive, and he drafted and read out the resolution on India. Urged by him the All-India Congress Committee resolved at its meeting in May 1927 'to recommend to the Congress to give support to the League as an associated organization'. This was formally accepted by the Congress at Madras. Gandhi had his reservations, but Nehru made it clear that *association* did not in any way mean *affiliation*.

However, following on the new 'left sectarian' policy adopted at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, there were harsh attacks on the Indian National Congress by the League in 1929. According to Nehru 'in 1931 . . . it [the League] excommunicated me with bell book and candle' (*Autobiography*, p. 164). The Congress broke off all relations with the League under instructions from Nehru who was then the President of the Congress.

Indian Quarterly Register, 1927, Vol. I; Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works* Vol. 2; Michael Brecher, *Nehru A Political Biography*, London, 1959; *Das Flammenzeichen vom Palais Egmont: Offizielles Protokoll des Kongresses Gegen Koloniale Unterdruckung und Imperialismus*, Berlin, 1927.

[2] Sri Krishna Dutt Palliwal (1895–1968) was initially close to the revolutionary nationalist underground in the UP. Later he claimed to draw inspiration from both Marx and Gandhi. He edited a weekly *Sainik*, wrote several books trying to reconcile Marxism with Sanātan Hindu Dharma, was elected President of UP Provincial Kisan Congress, and a member of the Central Legislative Assembly. *Dictionary of National Biography* (ed. S.P. Sen), Vol 3, 1974, pp. 289–91.

[3] The Eighth Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress was held at Cawnpore (Kanpur) from 26 to 28 November 1927 under the presidentship of Dewan Chaman Lal. Although himself well-known as a moderate, the President referred enthusiastically to the recent 'anniversary celebrations of the Soviet Republic' and 'the astonishingly prosperous and happy condition' of the workers there compared with the Czarist regime. However, he also stressed that India has 'no desire to copy the methods employed by any country to achieve its freedom'. P. S. Gupta, *A Short History of the AITUC*, New Delhi, 1980. pp. 101–6 SNR.

Motilal Nehru Abroad*

For the Tenth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was visited by the representatives of proletarian, peasant, and other revolutionary organizations of the whole world. A number of organizations and leading individuals in India were invited. There was particular interest in having Indian representatives come to the anniversary of the revolution. So even the belated arrival of the Nehrus (Motilal and Jawaharlal) was very much appreciated.[1] They were welcome as the leaders of a great people fighting for freedom. But their attitude was a disappointment for all and discrediting to the Indian nationalist movement. Indian revolutionary movement should be informed of it.

The Nehrus reached Moscow on 8 Nov., that is, one day too late to be present at the great anniversary demonstration in which a million and a half workers participated. When their belated arrival was deplored, Motilal remarked that they were not interested in public festivities and that they had come only for a short three-day visit to study the situation. He also stated clearly that they had come neither with sympathy nor antipathy for the Russian Revolution and the USSR.

The anniversary was the occasion for a world Congress of the Friends of the USSR. Apart from the workers' and peasants' representatives, leading intellectuals from many countries participated in the congress whose object was to decide what should be done to meet the danger of war menacing the world and declare the determination to defend the USSR in case of imperialist attack upon it.[2] To the surprise and even bewilderment of all the Nehrus refused to take part in the congress except as visitors in the opening session.

On the eve of the Congress a conference of the Eastern delegations took place under the chairmanship of Mme Sun Yat-sen. The object of the Conference was to declare that the oppressed peoples of the East sympathized with the Russian Revolution which has destroyed one of their cruel enemies, the Czarist imperialism; that the oppressed peoples of the East recognize that the Soviet Government has demonstrated its friendship for them in actual deeds as regards its relation with all the border states and by helping the anti-imperialist struggle in

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. IV, No. 1, January 1928, published under 'Notes and News'. SNR.

China; that the war against USSR prepared by the imperialist powers is at the same time a menace to the peoples of the East; and, therefore, the representatives of the oppressed peoples of the East would enthusiastically participate in the World Congress of the Friends of the USSR and pledge themselves to enforce its resolutions. The Indian nationalist leaders were present at that conference, but did not speak and vote for the above declaration which was moved by Mme Sun Yat-sen and adopted by acclamation.

Just a month later Motilal Nehru appeared before the General Council of the League against Imperialism at Brussels.[3] He did not, however, come to identify with the League and participate in its deliberations as regards the general anti-imperialist struggle. He came also as a visitor, only to speak about India in relation to the appointment of the Royal Commission on Reforms and about the attitude of the British Labour Party in this respect. It was an assembly of the representatives of the revolutionary liberation movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries throughout the world. In view of the recent insolent policy of the British government and the open solidarization of the British Social Democratic leaders with this policy, it was confidently expected that the leader of the Indian Nationalist Movement would declare the determination of the Indian people to overthrow imperialist yoke and with that revolutionary object make united front with the anti-imperialist forces of the world. But once again there was disappointment for those sympathizing with India's fight for freedom and discredit for the Indian nationalist movement.

In the revolutionary atmosphere that prevailed in the assembly the Pundit's juridical exposition of India's grievances fell flat. He began his speech by carefully disassociating himself and those he represented from the current in the Indian nationalist movement heading towards separation from the British Empire. After this his bitter complaints against Macdonald could hardly cut ice. He finished his feeble speech leaving the assembly wondering why had he come there. He admittedly did not want to struggle against imperialism.

It was also a riddle why the Nehrus came to Moscow; but their refusal to do or say anything that might be compromising (Motilal said that they did not want to commit themselves to anything) could, however, be explained. It was on the eve of the appointment of the Reform Commission. The nationalist leaders of the old Nehru's type could not afford to be indiscreet at that moment. But his supra-constitutional speech at Brussels even after the bubble of constitutional advance had been so cruelly burst, was inexplicable except in one way, namely that owing to its fear of and hostility for revolution bourgeois nationalism has gone hopelessly bankrupt and will never conduct a real struggle against imperialism.

Notes

[1] Jawaharlal went to Europe in 1926 for further treatment of his ailing wife; Motilal arrived in the summer of 1927. 'All of us—my father, my wife, my young sister, and I—paid a brief visit to Moscow during the tenth anniversary of the revolution. It was a very brief visit, just 3 or four days in Moscow, decided upon at the last moment' (Jawaharlal Nehru *An Autobiography*, 1962, p. 164). He mentioned in his *Autobiography* that he met M. N. Roy 'for a brief half-hour in Moscow' and was 'intellectually impressed by him' (ib., p. 154). The ECCI Manifesto issued on the occasion of the tenth anniversary appealed to the 'oppressed peoples of the colonies' to 'hold fast in your mind that the October revolution was, is, and will be the revolution of all the workers, all the oppressed, all the exploited' (*Inprekorr*, 4 Nov. 1927)—an appeal most unlikely to enthuse a lifelong political moderate like Motilal.

[2] The 'danger of war on Russia' became a central theme of Comintern propaganda, especially from the time of the rupture of diplomatic relations between Britain and Russia on 26 May 1927 and the bloody suppression of the communists in China. The Eighth Plenum of the ECCI (18–30 May 1927) adopted the theses on the danger of war and urged mobilization of the masses in defence of 'the fatherland of the international proletariat' (*Inprekorr*, 10 June 1927).

[3] The General Council of the League met at Brussels from 9 to 11 December 1927. Jawaharlal was already back in India, but Motilal attended. He explained in his speech that in the Congress there were those 'who aspire for freedom within the British empire and there are those who wish to work for freedom and independence without the British empire'. The following year he would be the leader of the Nehru Committee which produced the Report recommending Dominion Self-Government for India.

SNR.

Constituent Assembly*

In addition to boycotting the Simon Commission the Madras Congress has declared that the object of the nationalist movement is to secure complete independence for India. It is a truism that the object of a nationalist movement is to secure national independence. Nevertheless, it took the Indian National Congress more than forty years to make this declaration. This is the first time in the history of the movement that such a declaration is officially made. The resolution of the Madras Congress, therefore, is a historical event; but its practical value should not be exaggerated. As it is, the resolution is but an expression of desire. A desire is very far from its realization. In view of the fact that the Madras Congress did not discuss how national independence could be attained, the resolution can have but an academic nature.

Without underestimating the historical significance of the resolution we must warn the revolutionary nationalists not to sleep over this 'victory'. They have, indeed, scored a victory over the bourgeois leaders of the Congress who year after year succeeded in choking the voice of the nationalist rank and file. Two years ago, Gandhi, as President of the Congress, disallowed the resolution to be brought before the plenary session after it had secured a majority in the Subjects Committee. The bourgeois politicians have not changed their mind. They remain as incurably reformist as ever. But they have been forced by circumstances to loosen their moderating hold upon the Congress policy. We heartily congratulate the revolutionary nationalists of the left wing upon their victory and hope that they will really have the courage to take the leadership of the movement out of the hand of the bourgeois politicians whose policy of seeking compromise with imperialism has ended in miserable bankruptcy encouraging the imperialist rulers to reject insolently even the most moderate nationalist demands.

The nationalist movement will be rescued from constitutional degeneration, and switched off from the blind alley of pseudo-parliamentarism only by following up the Madras resolution with acts calculated to make the resolution more than an expression of desire.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. IV, No. 2, Feb. 1928, pp. 4–7. In the printed text of the *The Masses* a few words are missing and some lines are garbled in print in one paragraph. We have left out that brief passage indicating this by an ellipsis (...). SNR.

If the Madras resolution means anything, it means repudiation of the policy of the Swaraj Party which the Congress endorsed. It means India cannot have self-government within the British Empire. It means that 'equal partnership' cannot be attained in agreement with the imperialist overlords. All the tactics of the Indian nationalist movement, throughout its history, with the exception of the short period of mass movement in 1920–22 when it went out of bourgeois control, have been determined by the illusion that self-government within the British Empire was possible. As a matter of fact the nationalist bourgeoisie would accept junior partnership in the profitable business of exploiting the Indian masses as 'equal partnership'. But imperialism would not give anything just for the asking. Now that this has been made abundantly clear, the bubble of 'equal partnership' is burst, the tactics determined by this illusion, therefore, must be discarded. The revolutionary nationalists must propose new tactics to realize the new programme.

In order that they may not sleep over their 'victory' we draw the attention of the left-wingers to the fact that the bourgeois nationalist leaders have not abandoned their faith in the 'place in the sun'. While bitterly expressing their disappointment at the failure of the British rulers to meet them half way, all the responsible bourgeois nationalist leaders (including those of the Congress) talk of 'equal partnership' as the goal they aspire for.[1] The Constitutions that have been presented to the Congress for examination are all constitutions for India as a British Dominion. In view of the fact that the Congress has declared complete national independence as the object it strives for, it should have refused to consider these constitutions unless they were recast in conformity with the new programme of the Congress. One of these documents in written by Rangaswami Iyenger.[2] Another Congress leader Motilal Nehru, even in the midst of his vituperations against the British Labour Party, never forgets to specify the demand of India as 'equal partnership'. Speaking to the General Council of the League against Imperialism two weeks before the National Congress met in Madras, Motilal Nehru carefully disassociated himself and his party from those elements in the nationalist movement who advocate separation from the British Empire! If the Madras resolution were a serious political document, it should mean the ousting of Motilal Nehru from the leadership of the Congress. But nothing like that has happened; nor has Nehru said anything publicly rectifying his previous statements.

Obviously the bourgeois leaders do not take the Madras resolution seriously. They have simply allowed some latitude to the sentimentality of the petty bourgeois left wing in order to secure their enthusiastic support and services for the boycott of the Simon Commission.

The boycott is a legitimate protest against imperialist insolence; but by itself it is a sterile action. Not only the masses, but even the rank and file nationalists cannot concentrate their whole energy upon it. They are not directly concerned with it. But the boycott of the Commission by the bourgeois leaders, whose cooperation the commission will seek, cannot influence the situation unless it assumes the appearance of national demonstration. Imperialism has challenged the bourgeois nationalist leaders by the statement that boycott will not seriously hinder the work of the Commission. In other words, the Commission will do its work and make pre-determined recommendations, and imperialism is confident that it will be finally accepted by the bourgeois nationalists.[3] Some action on the part of the masses is necessary to change the situation, to make the imperialists take the boycott more seriously. The bourgeois leaders need the services of the petty bourgeois Congress enthusiasts to make some noise in favour of the boycott. If the revolutionary nationalists, deluded by the apparent victory won in Madras, fall in this net of the crafty bourgeois leaders, they will simply experience a much tamer repetition of the Non-cooperation.

In order to avoid the fiasco, they should broaden the boycott movement by formulating a programme of action on the basis of the Madras resolution. Firstly, they should boycott the Simon Commission not from the point of view of bourgeois nationalism, that is, as haggling in a bargain. Their boycott of the commission should be to repudiate the self-arrogated right of imperialism to determine the political future of India . . . The bourgeois nationalist parties are divided among themselves owing to the sectional interests they respectively represent. They are not united on the boycott. Some, who talked of boycott in the beginning, are already climbing down. Others will follow suit as the situation becomes clear. If there is lack of unity on the negative attitude, on the matter of positive demand, as regards what they want, the bourgeois parties are hopelessly divided. Under such circumstances the boycott is sure to fizzle out, if a broader basis is not found for the movement.

This basis will be provided by supplementing the negative slogan of boycott with the positive demand for the election of a *Constituent Assembly*. By putting forward this demand the revolutionary nationalists of the left wing will wrest the leadership of the movement from the faltering hands of the bourgeoisie. Thus they will give some real meaning to the Madras resolution. The demand for the election of the Constituent Assembly will be the practical assertion of the right of self-determination. The nationalist bourgeoisie will be put to test. They will be forced to say what do they mean by self-determination, and it will be clear what they mean.

With a view to possible dangerous development the bourgeois leaders circumvented the Madras resolution with the proviso that it should not 'involve any change in the Congress creed regarding Swaraj'. We wonder if the petty bourgeois left wing supporters of the 'independence resolution' understood that by inserting this proviso the bourgeois politicians took away with left hand what they gave with the right. The Congress creed regarding Swaraj is to obtain it 'by all peaceful and legitimate means'. We know that the naïve faith of the petty bourgeois rank and file in the bourgeois leaders of the Congress entertained the notion that all the leaders wanted independence of the country, but did not speak it out, because to say so would be liable to prosecution for sedition. It would be damaging enough for the bourgeois leaders if this were true. But it was not true, and that is proved by this gratuitous effort to emasculate the 'independence resolution' which could be passed without interference of the Public Prosecutor. It is not the fear of the government, but that of the masses—of revolution—that makes the bourgeois nationalists opposed to separation from the British Empire which provides them with a regime of 'law and order'. They are not satisfied with present conditions; but they do not want to jump from the frying pan into the fire. National independence cannot be had without struggle, and a struggle against a powerful imperialist state can be successful only as a revolutionary mass struggle. A revolutionary mass struggle is not likely to cease on conquering for the Indian bourgeoisie the right to rule in the place of the British inperialists. There is the danger of its continuing. Naturally the nationalist bourgeoisie do not want to play with fire. In Madras they found it necessary to give a nice-looking firework to their clamouring followers, but cleverly kept away the means of igniting it. The petty bourgeois left wing as a bunch of happy children did not notice what happened.

Now they can retrieve the mistake. The demand for Constituent Assembly and its actual election certainly do not exceed the limits of 'peaceful and legitimate means', but it is equally certain that the demand for the Constituent Assembly and its election will sharpen the conflict with imperialism. There is no plausible ground on which the bourgeois parties and leaders can be opposed to the election of the Constituent Assembly except by completely unmasking their anti-democratic face.

Legally and constitutionally, even the imperialist government cannot be opposed to the demand for the Constituent Assembly. When India wants something from the imperialist overlord, she must wait for his sanction. India does not need the sanction of the British rulers to create a fully constitutional organ which will speak in behalf of her entire population. The preposterous pretension of British imperialism that it denies self-determination to India to defend the interests of the masses of her population need not be met with arguments to prove the baselessness of this argument. Let the masses themselves challenge this pretension speaking through a Constitutional Assembly elected by them. Let the masses themselves demand the right of self-determination and assert this right not waiting for sanction from the British imperialists. The political fight with proxy, which has not been given by anybody, should cease. The political lawyers of bourgeois nationalism should stop jabbering and let the masses make their voice heard and power felt. Then, the Madras resolution will assume practical value, and national independence will not remain a far-off goal to be desired furtively; it will become an immediate issue to be fought for. Such a crystallization of the situation will result from a campaign with the demand for the election of a Constituent Assembly

But here again we come up against the fundamental question—the question of the programme of National Revolution. The left wing nationalists have still got to learn that India cannot be free without a revolution and that a revolution cannot be organized without a programme. The object of the agitation for the Constituent Assembly is to mobilize the masses in the struggle for national liberation. An organ of popular power must be created, and can only be created, with the object of fighting for the redress of immediate popular grievances. If the agitation is based upon the demand to elect a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution, it will surely fail to have popular support, and when its recommendations are ignored by the power that be, it will have no sanction behind it. But it will be altogether different with a Constituent Assembly whose mission it will be to enforce a programme of National Revolution. From the beginning the power will be with the masses. They will be asked to elect an organ which will have before it the task of fulfilling certain demands of theirs, in addition to solving the main question of national freedom. Thus the question of national freedom will cease to be something abstract for the masses. It will be linked up with their immediate interests. Thus and thus alone can a real struggle against the present imperialist offensive be organized. Will the petty bourgeois left-wingers give the Madras resolution vital political meaning by starting a mass campaign not only for the boycott of the Simon Commission, but for the election of a Constituent Assembly? And will they conduct this campaign with a programme of National Revolution?

The cardinal points in the programme of national revolution are: 1. establishment of a free national democratic state; 2. nationalization of land (abolition of Native States and landlordism); 3. abolition of all charges upon the peasants except a land tax not exceeding 15 per cent of the net income; 4. complete exemption from taxation for poor peasants living upon 'uneconomic holdings'; 5. annulment of peasants' indebtedness; 6. control of usury; 7. nationalization of public utilities (railways, telegraph, waterways, etc.) and mines; 8. minimum wage for industrial workers; 9. eight-hour day and 44-hour week; 10. improved working and housing conditions for the labourers; 11. social insurance (unemployment, sickness, old age, maternity, pension), the employers and the state contributing 75 per cent of the fund; 12. complete freedom of press, speech and assembly; 13. right for the workers to strike; 14. right to carry arms.

Let there be a Constituent Assembly elected with conscious and active participation of the masses to decide if the overwhelming majority of the Indian people demand the realization of this programme. There cannot be the least doubt about the decision. Therefore, we propose the election of the Constituent Assembly and call upon the revolutionary nationalists, who really want to see their country free, to support this demand.

Notes

[1] The Simon Commission (which included the Labour prime minister-to-be C. R. Attlee) was boycotted by the Congress on account of its all-British membership. At the instance of the Congress an all-Parties Conference produced a scheme of self-government in 1928, known as the Nehru Report (its principal authors were Motilal Nehru and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru). It recommended India being immediately made a self-governing Dominion and presented the outlines of a constitution which provided for parliamentary system with a bicameral legislature and allocation of subjects between the centre and the provinces. The recommendations were later accepted by the Congress at its Calcutta session presided by Motilal Nehru where the resolution of acceptance was moved by Gandhi. Sitaramayya, op.cit., pp.556–68. On 31 October 1929 the Governor-General Lord Irwin announced that 'the natural issue of India's Constitutional progress . . . is the attainment of Dominion Status'. S. Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Irwin 1926–31*, Oxford, 1957; *Nehru Report*, 1928.

[2] A. Rangaswami Iyengar (1877–1934) was one of the founders of the Swaraj Party in South India. Elected to the Central Legislative Assembly in 1924 he was secretary of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly, and was re-elected for a second term in 1927. In 1928 he became the editor of *The Hindu*. He attended the Second Round Table Conference in London as a delegate and acted as Gandhi's constitutional adviser. He also wrote a book in 1933 outlining a Federal Constitution for India. *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol 2, pp. 193–4.

[3] The Simon Commission published its Report in May 1930. A Round Table Conference with delegates from India met in 1930, 1931 and 1932. The British government produced a white paper in March 1933 containing proposals for the reform of the Indian Constitution, and on the basis of it the Government of India Act 1935 was passed by the British Parliament in August 1935. It came into force in April 1937 and in July the Congress formed Ministries in the majority of Governors' Provinces. SNR.

Constitution or a Programme?*

The first round of the fight has begun. The Simon Commission has reached India to find that it is not welcome. In this first round imperialist absolutism has been challenged by a broad united nationalist front.[1] It is the masses, however, which have demonstrated the will and ability to put up a real resistance. The strikes and demonstrations in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and other places are not a mere protest against certain forms of imperialist absolutism. They are a mighty challenge to imperialist domination as such. The workers enthusiastically participating in these strikes and demonstrations do not understand the intricate controversy over the right and rules of constitution-making. What they do understand is that they are oppressed and exploited, and that the imperialist government is the bulwark of this system of exploitation and oppression. Therefore they are eager to grasp any opportunity, to demonstrate their hostility to the existing order of things. The strikes and demonstrations taking place on the arrival of the Simon Commission have a deeper significance than simple boycott of the Commission. They mean a serious challenge to imperialist domination. The slogans of boycott have set the masses in action which will have a more far-reaching effect than to force the imperialist rulers to grant some concessions to the nationalist bourgeoisie. The section of the nationalist movement, which identifies itself with the mass movement raised by the slogan of boycott, must be prepared to travel on the arduous way of revolutionary fight. Otherwise, it will simply repeat the shameful betrayal of 1921 by sabotaging and deserting the mass movement as soon as it will reach a high revolutionary pitch. Mass movement, on whatever pretext it may develop, is essentially a threat to the existing regime of 'law and order'. The fact that, despite their inability to understand the intricacies of constitution-making, the masses so quickly and enthusiastically responded to the slogan of boycott shows that adequate forces for a revolutionary struggle against imperialism are ready. The country is like a vast powder-magazine waiting to be ignited into a gigantic explosion. This lesson should have been learnt from the Non-Cooperation movement. It was learnt by those who wanted to learn it. It was learnt by those anxious to conduct a revolutionary fight for national freedom. The strikes and demonstrations on the arrival of the Simon Commission once again teach the same lesson to those who want to learn it. If this lesson is learnt, India will come victorious out of the first round of this new fight with imperialism.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. IV, No. 3, March 1928, pp. 5–9; unsigned lead article. SNR.

It should not be forgotten that it is but the prelude to the real fight. The lesson of the first round should be applied in the coming fight. This first visit of the Commission is only to reconnoitre the ground. The Commission wants to sound the situation—to find out on the spot how serious is the opposition to imperialist absolutism. There are two facts the characterize the situation, namely, the willingness of the nationalist bourgeoisie to come to an agreement and the readiness of the masses for a revolutionary struggle. The Commission will not be worth its salt if it fails to take notice of these outstanding features of the situation. It will not fail. It is, indeed, to ascertain the relative strength of these two basic tendencies of the Indian nationalist movement that the Commission is making this first visit of reconnaissance. In the first test encounter, so to say, the Commission has found out that the masses are ever ready to fight. It has also noticed-that in an increasingly large section of the bourgeoisie the opposition is getting weaker. The two processes develop side by side. As a matter of fact one is influenced by the other. The more expressed the-fighting mood of the masses, the more pronounced becomes the desire of the nationalist bourgeoisie to come to an agreement with imperialism. The tactics of imperialists will be determined in view of these facts.[2] The interlude between the first round of test encounter and the real fight will be utilized by imperialism to split the nationalist united front, to win over the bourgeoisie by means of some concessions and to place the remaining section of the nationalist movement in a position where it will be confronted with the choice between a revolutionary mass fight and solidarization with the bourgeoisie in accepting imperialist domination, perhaps in a slightly camouflaged from. The choice of the progressive and democratic section of the nationalist movement in that crisis will be predetermined by how it will use the interlude.

From the very begining there should not be any illusion about what attitude the bourgeoisie will eventually take. It is already clear that their opposition even to the composition and method of work of the Simon Commission is sham, their support to the boycott half-hearted. Without underestimating the importance of a united front against imperialist absolution even for a short period and with minimum demands the revolutionaries must know all the time that the bourgeoisie will eventually turn against the mass movement and compromise with imperialism. Therefore the tactics of a united front with the bourgeoisie with the object of pushing them in the struggle against imperialism should not interfere with the basic task of mobilizing the workers and peasant masses with slogans corresponding to their immediate grievances and demands. If the victory in the first round is followed up with activities during the intervening period of agitation and organization of the masses, victory in the coming real fight will be guaranteed. To produce the desired result these activities must be according to a programme. The immediate task of that section of the nationalist movement, which is committed to the resolution of independence passed by the Madras Congress, is therefore, not to draft a Constitution, but to have a clearly defined Programme of Action.

The outstanding features of the situation should be taken into consideration while drafting the programme of action. The object of the action in the immediate future, for which it is necessary to draft a programme, is to assert the right of self-determination in reply to the imperialist challenge to this right. First of all it must be ascertained which elements of the population will participate in the action. It is no longer difficult to do it. The bourgeoisie as represented by the Liberal Federation, Independent Nationalist Party and the Responsivists, are not serious in their demand for self-determination. As intelligent people and practical politicians they know that the right of self-determination cannot be effectively and successfully asserted without running the risk of a revolution which may not be more favourable to their class interest than imperialist domination. They know that nothing can be had just for the asking. If India wants to be completely free from British yoke, she must fight for it, and a fight having for its object the overthrow of British domination over India will have to involve the masses of the population. If it could be guaranteed that the masses would meekly subside into their present state of economic misery, social slavery and political suppression after putting the native bourgeoisie in the saddle vacated by the British, the native bourgeoisie might make a bid for power; but there is no such guarantee. On the contrary, the toiling masses, in course of the nationalist struggle, become class conscious and are very likely to demand a share in the national independence. Even when acting under the leadership and influence of the bourgeoisie or their intellectual agents, the masses are instinctively driven by their class interest. As the struggle develops instinct develops into consciousness. For objective reasons the national revolution cannot be a simple transfer of political power from the British imperialists to the Indian bourgeoisie. No revolution is a simple transfer of political power. The transfer of political power is the result of the shifting of class forces. Indian national revolution is bound to cause readjustment of class relations—it is bound to be a social (not socialist) revolution. Therefore the nationalism of the Indian bourgeoisie fights shy of revolution. Afraid of revolution, they are unable to assert the right of self-determination. Against the danger of revolution they must have the protection of the British regime of 'law and order'.

The outburst against the Independence resolution of the Madras Congress is indicative of the attitude of the bourgeoisie and their spokesmen. Let alone the frankly bourgeois politicians, Gandhi himself has taken up the cudgel. The cat is out of the bag. It has become clear whose axe the Mahatma grinds. Of course for us it is no revelation. Even in the days when it was sacrilegious to say a word against the Mahatma, we alone had the courage to call him what he was—apostle of class domination. Later he cynically discarded his 'anti-capitalist' pretensions and came out openly as the defender of wage-slavery [his speech at Jamshedpur].[3]

At last he brazenly opposes national independence! This also he has all along done, but succeeded in camouflaging it with sophistries which coming from the Mahatma easily duped the guileless petty bourgeoisie. We always challenged Gandhi to define what he meant by Swaraj. We did so, because we knew what he meant. We wanted the statement not for ourselves, but for his trusting followers. He stubbornly refused to define Swaraj because he did not want to give his game away before it was absolutely necessary. Three years ago he did show his hand when as president of the Congress he did not allow the Independence resolution to be brought before the plenary session after it had secured a majority in the Subjects Committee. Still the people were taken in by the Mahatma's sophistry. They believed in his illusive formula: 'within the Empire if possible, outside the Empire if necessary'.[4] The impossibility of 'equal partnership within the empire' has been all along evident. Imperialist refusal to consider even the most moderate demand of the nationalist bourgeoisie in appointing the Reform Commission has removed any doubt that might have still lingered. The necessity for India to go out of the British empire, should she want to be really free, was never so evident as now. Nevertheless the Mahatma is terribly annoyed that the Madras Congress has passed the much-belated resolution about independence. Together with Mrs Besant and others of her ilk the Mahatma ridicules the Independence resolution as impractical. Well, if it is so, why then does he bother so much about it? No, it is not the 'impracticalness' of the resolution that bothers the Mahatma and other defenders of class domination. It is its dangerous character that worries them. The adoption of this resolution opens up an entirely new perspective before the nationalist movement. It is shifted from the blind-alley of reformism to the high road of revolutionary struggle. By adopting it the Congress objectively liberates itself, on the one hand, from the quagmire of pseudo-parliamentarism and, on the other hand, from the reactionary cult of Gandhism. The Congress breaks away from the domination and influence of the capitalist and landowning classes which being hostile to a revolution are against national liberation. It irrevocably commits itself to revolutionary mass action without which its resolution about national independence can never be realized.

A spontaneous mass movement however is not a sufficient guarantee for success. It must have a class-conscious revolutionary leadership. Otherwise the bitter experience of 1920–21 will be repeated. This leadership cannot come from the Congress even if it firmly stands by its resolutions. It is a good sign that the petty bourgeois nationalists are at last breaking away from reformist and reactionary influence. The farther they go away from these, the nearer they must come to the working class. This regrouping of class forces creates the condition for a revolutionary struggle against imperialism for national freedom. The working class will welcome the revolutionary orientation of the left wing nationalists and make a united front with them in the anti-imperialist struggle. This the working class have already demonstrated in action. The boycott resolution was translated into action first by the working class, which declared their intention to strike on the arrival of the Simon Commission. As during its present visit the Commission does not propose to ask people to appear before it, there would be no practical expression of the boycott had not the working class organized strikes and demonstrations. Strikes and demonstrations strictly speaking are not measures of boycotting the Commission. They exceed the narrow limit of the negative slogan of boycott. So the action of the working class from the very beginning broadens and deepens the struggle raising it above the level of constitutional protest.

The difference between the present movement and the movement in 1920–21 is that today the mass movement has a decidedly class character while on the previous occasion it was an elemental upheaval. Today the masses are not whipped by the bourgeoisie into a nationalist demonstration to be reined in whenever necessary. Today they are taking a leading part in the anti-imperialist struggle from the point of view of their class interests. And above all, today the mass movement has a class leadership in the Communist and the Workers' and Peasants' Parties.[5] So the danger of the mass movement being misused, sabotaged and finally betrayed by the bourgeois and petty bourgeois politicians is not so great as in 1920–21. But the danger is still there. The class consciousness of the masses is still intuitive. The working class parties are still young and weak. The proletarian vanguard of the masses is still politically backward although it has gained considerable experience in a series of struggles during the last two years. Such events as the Bengal Nagpur Railway workers deciding upon a general strike against the will of the bourgeois reformist leaders and the striking workers of Bombay chasing the reformist leaders from their meetings are of tremendous importance.[6] They are landmarks in the history of the Indian labour movement. In this new wave of mass movement the working class will gather more experience and political education, thus making this movement stronger and more far-reaching than the previous one taking place in 1920–21.

Possible dangers, however, should not be overlooked. Imperialist provocation may transform mass demonstrations into Hindu–Moslem riots. Such an eventuality will provide the bourgeois leaders with the pretext to propose the liquidation of the mass movement. They would argue that the country is not yet ready for such action, and by this argument justify their compromise with imperialism. It is not sure how the petty bourgeois left wing nationalists would behave in such a crisis. They may be stampeded by the bourgeois politicians who will be aided by repressive measures taken by the government. As this time the working class enters the anti-imperialist struggle very much as an independent class force, and there are on the scene revolutionary parties to give it the necessary leadership, the movement cannot be destroyed as in 1921 by the bourgeois politicians. The bourgeoisie may and eventually will withdraw from the united anti-imperialist front; the petty-bourgeois left wing nationalists also may follow suit; but that will not leave the movement without leadership. The working class will continue the struggle under the guidance of its own party which will acquire strength and experience in the fight.

To develop the class consciousness of the masses is the surest guarantee against all these possible dangers. For this purpose a clear programme of action is necessary. The minimum demands of the workers and peasants must be concretely formulated and the left wing nationalists should be asked to subscribe to them as the platform of the united anti-imperialist front. The latter talk vaguely about the masses; but they are more fascinated by the pastime of constitution-making than convinced of the necessity of formulating the programme of the movement. This is not accidental. Even the petty bourgeoisie, which have openly expressed disagreement with the bourgeois programme of junior partnership in the British empire, are reluctant to commit themselves to a programme of the readjustment of social relations as a result of the national revolution. It is not difficult to write a constitution. Indian nationalist movement is rich in legal minds. But the masses, continued development of whose revolutionary action is the guarantee for success in the struggle against imperialism, will be inspired into revolutionary action not by a picture of the future government, but by what the government will do for the working class. The issue should be brought much nearer to them. Strikes, demonstrations and other forms of mass action in the countryside as well as in the urban areas cannot be developed and spread as an abiding movement on an issue which is abstract and remote as far as the workers and peasants are concerned. Demands for the redress of immediate grievances should be put forward as the lever of the movement. The programme of action is the collective presentation of these demands.

These demands are made by the workers and peasants themselves on innumerable occasions. They are made in strikes and agrarian disturbances. More than once we have formulated these demands. They are:

1. Abolition of the Native States and other forms of Feudal landownership; 2. reduction of the rent and taxes on land to a level not above 15 per cent of the net income from land; 3. abolition of all other charges and levies upon the peasantry; 4. complete exemption from taxation of the poor peasants living upon 'uneconomic holdings'; 5. abolition of all indirect taxation; 6. annulment of peasants' indebtedness; 7. control of usury (interest not to exceed 8 per cent per annum); 8. all-round increase of wages of the industrial workers guaranteeing a minimum standard of living and comfort; 9. reduction of the working day to eight hours and the week to 44 hours; 10. improvement of the conditions of housing and labour of the working class; 11. insurance against unemployment, sickness, maternity, old age, etc. at the cost of the state and the employers; 12. complete freedom of speech, press and association (labour organizations, public meetings, demonstrations, etc.); 13. right to strike to enforce economic and political demands; 14. right to possess and carry arms; 15. free education up to the secondary standard.

This is the action programme of the working class in the present situation. Developed with the aid of the agitation in favour of these demands, the campaign for Constituent Assembly will be irresistibly powerful. It will be consciously and enthusiastically supported by the worker and peasant masses. The working class have acted promptly to support the boycott slogan issued by the National Congress. Let the latter now support the demands of the workers and peasants. Thus will be formed a fighting anti-imperialist united front which is necessary should the movement survive the sure betrayal by the bourgeoisie.

The pastime of constitution-making should be left to the bourgeois nationalist politicians who do not want and are opposed to a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The oppressed masses, who have demonstrated the will to fight, should be mobilized in an effective resistance to imperialist absolutism by means of a programme reflecting their interests. The immediate task of the National Congress is to adopt such a fighting programme as outlined above. For the worker and peasant masses the struggle for the realization of the above demands is inseparable from the struggle for national freedom.

Notes

[1] The Simon Commission landed in Bombay on 3 February 1928. The boycott was launched by observing an all-India *hartal* on that day. There were mass protest demonstrations and clashes with the police in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Patna, Lucknow, Delhi, Lahore and Peshawar. In October at Lahore the veteran nationalist leader Lala Lajpat Rai was seriously hurt during a lathi-charge by the police on the demonstrators; this led to his death in November. In its April 1928 issue *The Masses* published an article on 'The Significance of Third February' analysing and evaluating the *hartal*.

[2] After the general election in Britain in June 1929 when Labour Party came into power Sir John Simon wrote to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald on 16 October proposing that after the publication of the Commission's Report it would be advisable to call a Round Table Conference in London with representatives from India. The proposed First RTC met in London from 12 November 1930 to 19 January 1931; there were 57 delegates from British-India and 16 delegates from the Princely States. *Simon Commission Report*, 2 Vols., 1930; *Report of the First Round Table Conference*, 1931.

[3] In his Presidential Address at the Eighth Session of the AITUC at Kanpur (1927) Diwan Chaman Lal, very much a moderate himself, criticized 'Mahatma Gandhi [who] preaches to the workers at Jamshedpur "submission to the masters" '. P. S. Gupta, *A Short History of AITUC*, p. 106.

[4] At the Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress (1924) over which he presided Gandhi explained his reasons for the discontinuance of non-cooperation and stated that he 'would strive for Swaraj within the Empire'. See *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Vol II, footnote on p. 316.

[5] Communist Party and WPP members who attended the Madras session of the Congress got together on 28 December 1927 and decided to hold an all-India Conference early the following year to formally establish the Workers' and Peasants' Party of India. A set of theses and documents was prepared and circulated in February 1928, and published as a booklet under the title *A Call to Action*. The set was adopted at the WPP annual conference at Bhatpara (March–April 1928).

[6] During 1927 and early 1928 several reports of the BNR strike were published in *The Masses*. The first strike took place in February-March 1927 when 40,000 employees of BNR struck work over issues of low wages and retrenchment. Retrenchment continued even after the strike had been called off, and when this was resisted the BNR declared a lock-out on 12 September. In October the All-India Railwaymen's Federation meeting at Kharagpur decided to prepare for an all-India railwaymen's strike. A settlement was reached in December through negotiation by moderate trade union leaders, V. V. Giri and N. M. Joshi. The BNR agreed to pay full lock-out wages to the Kharagpur men, but the union was made to accept the retrenchment of 2000 men. According to *The Masses* ('The Lessons of Kharagpur', February 1928, pp. 1–2), this was 'a partial victory'. SNR.

Selections from
International Press Correspondence

The Indian Constitution	24 August
The Indian National Congress	27 December

The Indian Constitution*

In December 1927, the Indian National Congress declared the attainment of Complete National Independence to be its ultimate goal. It further decided to boycott the British Royal Commission appointed to examine the possibility of further constitutional progress for India. In view of the fact that during the forty-two years of its existence the National Congress had never demanded national independence, last year's resolution was hailed, inside and outside India, as the beginning of a new stage in the nationalist movement. It should be remembered that even in the stormy days of 1920–22, when the country was on the verge of a revolution, under the leadership of Gandhi the Congress persistently refused to demand national independence and declared its objects to be self-government within the British Empire. So, last year's resolution naturally raised high hopes, and it was believed that the nationalist bourgeoisie would still play a revolutionary role in the anti-imperialist struggle. Those with a better understanding of the situation and of the class composition of the Congress leadership, were, however, sceptical. In this resolution they saw only a manoeuvre of the bourgeois leaders to retain their control over the radical (politically) petty bourgeoisie and to harness the popular discontent in order to strike a favourable bargain with imperialism.

In the beginning of the year representatives of all the nationalist parties met in a conference to devise the ways and means of enforcing the boycott of the Simon Commission. The conference set up a committee to draw up a constitution.[1] One might reasonably expect that the projected constitution should have for its fundamental principle the Independence Resolution of the National Congress. Disappointment was in store for those who entertained such expectation.

After several months of deliberation, which was carried on behind closed doors, the committee has presented to the people the result of its labours. It has declared in favour of a self-governing India as a part of the British Empire! And this not as a stepping stone to a further goal, but as the 'genuine responsible government'.

The committee which drafted this constitution had Moti Lal Nehru, leader of the Swaraj Party, as its chairman. Apart from Nehru, among the nine authors of the constitution, there are four more Swarajist leaders including Subhas Chandra Bose who is considered to represent the radical wing of the party. Bose was the trusted lieutenant of the late C. R. Das (the founder of the Swaraj Party), and was arrested in the beginning of 1925 on the suspicion of having connection with and sympathy for secret revolutionary organizations. After two years' detention in prison he was released at the beginning of this year. The remaining members of the committee are two titled ex-high officials representing the Hindu and Moslem bourgeoisie respectively and an ex-army officer representing the landed aristocracy. If Bose is considered to be the spokesman of the urban petty bourgeoisie, then this draft constitution should be accepted as embodying the demands of all but the proletarian and peasant masses.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, No. 54, 24 Aug. 1928, pp. 954–5; signed article by M. N. Roy SNR.

In addition to the fundamental clause defining the relation with the imperialist overlord, the draft constitution demands: 1. abolition of the Ministry for India in the British Government; 2. a sovereign Parliament composed of the king (British), a senate (200 members indirectly elected through the provincial legislatures) and a house of representatives (500 members elected directly by universal adult suffrage); and 3. a Council of Ministers (nationality of the ministers not mentioned) responsible for every branch of administration to the parliament.

The British Governor General will remain as the head of the government. 'Emoluments, allowances and pensions' for the British officials of the public services are guaranteed.

The most remarkable and interesting point in the document is the following:

> We cannot see why men who have put great sums of money into India should be at all nervous . . . Is there are any special interests of European commerce which require special treatment in the future, it is only fair that the Europeans should formulate proposals. We do not doubt that they will receive proper consideration from those anxious for a peaceful solution of the political problem.

This is an olive branch to those who, fearing that political self-government might encroach too much upon the privileges of imperialist trade and finance, would oppose the compromise constitution. This passage also contains the hint that in course of negotiation the Indian bourgeoisie would agree to imperial preference, thus admitting British monopoly over the foreign trade of India. A few days before the draft constitution was published, the Associated Chamber of Commerce of India (British and European traders) issued its memorandum for the Simon Commission in which it was energetically demanded that any new reform of the Indian government must so provide that no discrimination against foreign commercial interests shall be possible. The nationalist bourgeoisie, 'anxious for a peaceful solution of the political problem', concedes this demand.

The draft constitution is not a surprise. As a matter of fact, much more is demanded therein than will eventually be accepted. It is not yet known how the nationalist movement as a whole has received the document. But it is sure to be accepted officially by the National Congress, notwithstanding last year's resolution. The petty bourgeois nationalist revolutionaries will grumble, but will hardly be able to change the course of politics under bourgeois leadership.

How the demands will be received by the British is also still difficult to say precisely. The sympathetic tone adopted by the correspondent of the *Times* in transmitting the purport of the document is, however, indicative. He makes such commentaries:

> The tone of the document is admirable. The possibility of a political existence outside the Empire is not considered, but it postulates the disappearance of the Indian Empire in a British Empire.

Considering that the messages of the *Times* correspondent are often officially inspired and always reflect the views of the British circles in India, these commentaries can be taken as the straw showing which way the wind blows.

The comments of the Calcutta *Statesman* (organ of British commerce) also indicate that the document maybe expected to receive a favourable consideration as a basis for negotiation. The paper writes: 'it is a great advance to have the Indian demand stated with a precision it hitherto lacked, and in reasonable language'.

The boycott of the Simon Commission, as far as the nationalist bourgeoisie is concerned, has practically broken down. Several provincial legislatures have passed the government motion appointing committees of elected members to co-operate with the Simon Commission. In Bengal, the stronghold of the Swaraj Party, the government won with a majority of 72 to 50. It is almost a foregone conclusion that in its autumn session the Central Legislature will also agree to set up its committee to co-operate with the Royal Commission which will return to India in October. Then will begin the negotiations to strike the bargain, the imperialists conceding as little as possible, the nationalist bourgeoisie accepting as much as obtainable peacefully.

The appearance of boycott may still be kept up to save political faces and to create a smoke-screen for the co-operation behind the scene. But it is certain the nationalist bourgeoisie is not going to encourage mass demonstrations as took place during the first visit of the Simon Commission at the beginning of the year. Already then, towards the end, the bourgeois nationalist leaders condemned mass demonstrations. So any real opposition to the Simon Commission can now only come from the workers and peasant masses; and in case of a big movement the urban petty bourgeoisie will join in.

The possibility of a class differentiation in the nationalist movement, the petty bourgeois rank and file breaking away from bourgeois leadership owing to the treachery of the latter, is still remote. The Republican Party formed by some of the left wing elements inside the Congress when the Independence Resolution was adopted never functioned.[2] Under the influence of the Communists, petty bourgeois radical leaders moved in the Joint Conference of all the Nationalist Parties that the projected constitution should be framed on the basis of the Congress resolution. Some of the left motions were even accepted by the conference; but in actually framing the constitution all radical principles about a 'Declaration of Rights' were brushed aside together with the Congress resolution. Only the anxiety of the nationalist bourgeoisie for 'a peaceful solution of the political problem' prevailed.

The grant of the draft constitution will be an improvement on present conditions; but obviously it contains the maximum demands of the nationalist bourgeoisie providing sufficient margin to climb down in course of the negotiations. It is altogether out of the question that imperialism will grant the maximum demands of the Indian bourgeoisie just for the asking. More than a parliamentary fight must take place before even self-government within the Empire is conceded. The mass demonstrations during the first visit of the Simon Commission showed that the country was prepared for such fight; but the nationalist bourgeoisie, while vituperating against the insolent challenge of imperialism, were reluctant to take up this challenge with courage. Imperialism knows the weakness of the Indian bourgeoisie, and will concede very little. Ultimately the nationalist bourgeoisie will accept responsible government in the provinces and some superficial reforms in general.

The fight for real national freedom thus finally devolves upon the workers and peasant masses under independent class leadership. Although the petty bourgeoisie still remains largely under the control and influence of the treacherous reformist bourgeois leaders, the proletarian masses have broken away from them. The great strikes and lock-outs of this year are very distinct from previous mass movements in that they have clearly a class character. The development of independent political action by the working class is splitting the petty bourgeois radical nationalists into two ever-diverging tendencies. One advances towards revolutionary alliance with the working class in the Workers' and Peasants' Party; and the other moves rapidly towards Fascism. The radical leader Bose, who collaborated with traditionally reformist bourgeois leaders in framing the new constitution, represents the Fascist wing of the petty bourgeoisie. This re-grouping of class forces is a pre-condition for a revolutionary anti-imperialist fight for national freedom. The unmasking of the bourgeois leaders and their petty bourgeois allies by the new constitution will hasten this process.

Notes

[1] At the invitation of the Congress Working Committee an All-Parties' Conference met at Delhi on 12 February 1928 under the chairmanship of the Congress President Dr M. A. Ansari. During February and March there were 25 sittings to sort out various problems of framing a draft constitution. On 19 May a Committee was appointed, with Motilal Nehru as Chairman, which submitted its Report and recommendations in July. The All-Parties' Conference met again at Lucknow from 28 to 31 August and accepted the Report which recommended Dominion Self-government. Among those who were participants in the Lucknow Conference were the Maharaja of Mahmudabad, Raja Rampal Singh, Dr Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam, Sir C. Sankaran Nair, Mr Sachchidananda Sinha, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, etc. However, when the constitution recommended by the Nehru Committee came up for discussion at the All-India Convention at Calcutta in December, it met with strong opposition and disagreement, and the convention was adjourned *sine die*. Sitaramayya, *History of the INC*, pp. 546–66; R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement*, Vol III, 1963, pp. 311–15.

[2] After the Congress session at Madras some 'left wing' delegates met on 28 December and resolved to form a Republican Congress within the Indian National Congress whose duty ought to be, according to Jawaharlal Nehru who was elected its President, 'to lay stress on things which were to be done to give effect to the resolution on independence'. *Indian Quarterly Register* 1927, Vol. II. However, the Republican Congress never got off the ground. SNR.

The Indian National Congress*

During the Christmas week the Indian National Congress will hold its Forty-third Annual Session. The principal task of the Congress this year is to settle the controversy between its two wings advocating, respectively, Self-government within the British Empire and Complete Independence as the goal of the nationalist movement.[1] The decision of this burning question will have historical significance. It will seriously influence the future development of the nationalist movement.

At present the nationalist movement is split into two distinct factions, one representing the big bourgeoisie and the other the petty bourgeoisie. The reconciliation of the two factions can take place only on the terms of the former. For the unity of the movement the big bourgeoisie will never support the demand for complete independence which will objectively commit them to the policy of revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Indeed, they advocate self-government within the British Empire admittedly in order to avoid the violent forms of struggle that the demand for complete independence inevitably implies. As the petty bourgeoisie alone are not capable of initiating and carrying on a revolutionary struggle, their dissatisfaction and revolt against the reformism of the big bourgeoisie are bound to fizzle out. They will never take up an actual struggle for the realization of their demand for complete independence, until and unless they are brought into a fighting alliance with classes more revolutionary, namely the proletariat and peasantry.

The outstanding feature of the nationalist movement during this year has been the process of class differentiation. Growing rebelliousness of the petty bourgeois left wing, on the one side, has been simultaneous with the concentration, on the other, of all the political groups representing the big bourgeoisie. The political groups representing the big bourgeoisie, which left the Congress in the revolutionary days of 1920–21, are today reunited with the right wing of the Congress in a reformist bourgeois bloc outside the Congress. For all practical purposes, this bloc of the big bourgeois political groups has become a rival of the National Congress which is overwhelmingly petty bourgeois in composition and outlook.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, No.91, 27 December 1928, pp. 1732–33. Signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

The adoption by the Congress last year of a resolution declaring complete independence as its goal indicated the revolt of the petty bourgeois left wing against the reformism of the big bourgeoisie. The revolt has since gathered strength and assumed an organizational form in the so-called Independence League. But in every sharp conflict with the big bourgeoisie the weakness of this revolt is revealed.

Last year the reformist leaders allowed the passage of the Independence Resolution evidently to placate the left wing opposition which represented widespread sentiment in the country. For, immediately after the National Congress had adopted the resolution, the right wing leaders began to work against the resolution. They met the representatives of the big bourgeoisie outside the Congress in what was called the All-parties' Conference which set itself the task of drawing up a Constitution acceptable by all the political tendencies in the country.

As was to be expected, the All-parties' Conference, in August last, produced a Constitution for India as a self-governing Dominion inside the British Empire. The Sub-committee of the Conference, which actually drew up the Constitution, included four leaders of the National Congress, one of them being a left-winger. This cynical disregard for the Congress resolution on the part of its leaders sharpened the conflict inside the Congress. The left wing, for the first time in the history of the National Congress, openly criticized the action of the official leaders. But instead of having the entire National Congress as an organization to stand by its own resolution as against the treacherous act of the bourgeois right wing leaders, it set up the so-called Independence League.[2] The right wing leaders immediately seized upon that blunder, and generously admitted the right of those believing in independence to the expression of their opinion.

Politically also the left wing leaders took up a very weak and equivocal position. For example, in the meeting of the All-parties' Conference, which adopted the draft Constitution, the spokesmen of the left expressed their disagreement with the document, but did not vote against it as, they said, they did not want to obstruct the work of the Conference! At the same meeting, the representatives of the big bourgeoisie, however, did not mince words in stating their policy. They said that they were opposed to the demand for complete independence because it could not be realized without disturbing peace and order. Besides, the status of a self-governing dominion is as good as independence. The failure of the left wing leaders to condemn the right wing of treachery for supporting this point of view, clearly and definitely rejected by the National Congress, revealed their inability to bid for the leadership of the entire nationalist revolutionary movement.

The political weakness and tactical mistake of the left leaders eventually resulted in the endorsement of the Nehru Report (the Constitution drafted by the All-parties' Conference) by the Executive of the National Congress. Of course, the Congress Executive qualified its endorsement by declaring that this did not affect last year's resolution as regards independence. But this is obviously a make-belief declaration to save the face of the left wing leaders. A convenient formula has been found to compose the controversy. It is that the status of a self-governing dominion and independence are not mutually exclusive. The one can be accepted as an advance towards the other. But in view of the fact that those advocating dominion status are of the opinion that it is as good as independence, the formula composes the controversy by eliminating one side of it, namely advocacy of independence. The left wing leaders have been outmanoeuvred by the right wing leaders possessing greater political experience and a clearer class orientation.

The débâcle of left wing leadership, however, does not alter the realities of the situation, which are a process of class differentiation inside the nationalist ranks, and a resulting radicalization of the nationalist movement. Revolt of the petty bourgeois nationalist ranks against the compromising reformist policy of the bourgeois leaders is the characteristic feature of the situation. It breaks out on all sides in different forms. Independence League, Republican Party, Republican Army, Volunteer Corps, Workers' and Peasants' Party and such other organizations of minor importance represent this radicalization of the nationalist movement taking place in consequence of class differentiation.

If the revolt of the petty bourgeois nationalist masses does not receive the leadership of a more revolutionary class, the right wing leaders will recover their control of the nationalist movement and temporarily obstruct the process of its radicalization. Several months ago, when the left wing revolt appeared threatening, Motilal Nehru, the right wing leader of the National Congress and the President of the All-parties' Conference, warned his rebellious followers against 'bogus advocates of independence among whom you will find some rank communists'. A shrewd bourgeois politician, Nehru knows that he would recover his control over the petty bourgeois left nationalists, if only he could keep them clear of communist influence.

Had not the left leaders allowed themselves to be hopelessly outmanoeuvred, the coming meeting of the Congress would have been the scene of the battle for the leadership of the nationalist movement. As the situation is at present, the right wing will retain its hold. Taking advantage of the political weakness and tactical blunders of the left leaders, it has gone over to the offensive. The right wing leader

Motilal Nehru, who had previously been elected president of the coming meeting of the Congress, took up the challenge of the left, and offered to resign, should the movement so desire. In view of the fact that he had acted in crass violation of the resolution of last year's Congress, and had expressed his determination to stand faithfully by the All-parties' Conference, the left wing should have demanded the acceptance by the Congress of Nehru's resignation. Indeed, the left wing should have demanded his resignation before he offered it himself. But, on the contrary, the left leaders were routed before Nehru's offensive. And the right wing leader will preside over the coming meeting of the National Congress with the authority, twice given, of the entire movement.

In this situation there can be but little doubt about the outcome of the Congress. Of course, as the débâcle of the left leaders does not represent the elimination of the process of radicalization of the nationalist ranks, it is possible, if not probable, that in the Congress the opposition will put up a stronger fight by demanding the rejection of the Constitution drafted by the All-parties' Conference. Nehru, as the main author and defender of the Constitution, will no doubt press for its adoption by the Congress. If necessary, some formula of compromise will be found, and, for all practical purposes, the policy of the bourgeois bloc, the majority of whose component organization stand outside the Congress, will be imposed upon the National Congress, in spite of the process of radicalization in operation inside its ranks. Such an outcome will once again prove the inability of the petty bourgeoisie to play an independent political role, and show that the Indian national revolution can further develop only under the hegemony of the proletariat.

Notes

[1] The forty-third annual session of the Congress was held at Calcutta in December 1928 with Motilal Nehru as President. Gandhi had publicly criticized the independence resolution adopted at Madras as 'hastily conceived and thoughtlessly passed' (*Young India*, signed article 12 January 1928) and maintained that no common *Indian* word for independence existed which was 'intelligible to the masses' (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 35, p. 454). He now came out of his temporary political retirement, and moved the first resolution of the Calcutta session on 26 December, which committed the Congress to the adoption of the Dominion Constitution proposed by the Nehru Committee, but also provided that if that Constitution was not accepted by the British Parliament on or before 31 December 1930, non-violent non-cooperation would be revived. Separate amendments to the resolution were moved by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, and in the end a compromise resolution was moved by Gandhi and carried by a majority. Commitment to the Dominion Constitution was in no way qualified, but the period of the ultimatum was shortened by a year to 31 December 1929. Sitaramayya, op.cit., p. 559–63.

Subhas Bose's amendment proclaiming that 'nothing short of independence' could be the

Congress objective was lost by 973 votes to 1350. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, Vol. II, pp. 220–22.

[2] The Independence of India League was formed on 30 August 1928 with the declared objective of fighting the Nehru Report which advocated Dominion Status. At a meeting of its members in Delhi in November Srinivas Iyengar was elected as President, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose as joint secretaries, and Shiva Prasad Gupta as treasurer. S. C. Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, Vol. II; J. Nehru, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3. SNR.

On the Indian Question in the Sixth World Congress of CI

Introductory editorial note

This document, like the Draft Resolution on the Indian Question, was never officially published by the Comintern. However, a copy of it was included as a prosecution exhibit in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. About two years after his release from jail Roy published his book *Our Differences* (Saraswaty Library, Calcutta, September 1938) which contained the document (pp. 44–114). In a footnote he wrote that the document was 'written in 1929' (p. 44). In the Preface to the volume he also wrote that 'the document was written at the end of 1929' (p. iv).

However, on careful consideration I think that there is an error in this date. In fact in the Preface Roy made another mistake which would explain his second mistake. He wrote that 'in 1929 the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International abandoned the tactics of united front' (p. i). But the Sixth Congress was held from 17 July to 1 September 1928. Having in memory mistakenly postdated the Sixth Congress by one year, he presumably also postdated the document by the same period.

It is clear from the text of the document that it was written shortly after the proceedings of the Sixth Congress had become available and while Roy still had direct access to the leaders of the Comintern and did not find the avenues of communication closed to him. The Congress ended on 1 September, but the speeches, resolutions, reports and declarations continued to appear in *Inprecor* till December 1928. In fact the 'Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial and Semi-Colonial countries' were published in *Inprecor* on 12 December 1928 (Vol. 8, No. 88). *Protokoll des 6 Weltkongresses des Kommunistischen Internationale* was published in four volumes in December 1928 from Hamburg. The original draft theses presented by Kuusinen were modified in important respects under strong criticism, and were 'accepted against 12 British votes and one abstention' on the last day of the Congress.

Roy presumably wrote the document from Berlin sometime in late December 1928 or very early January 1929. He had always been quick to respond to a debate, and the relevant material regarding the Congress proceedings would have been accessible in Berlin by mid-December. Since a copy of the document was included as a prosecution exhibit in the Meerut Conspiracy Case and large-scale arrests in connection with that case took place in March 1929, some copies of the document were very likely to have reached India in January-February. Roy's last piece of writing in *Inprecor* was published in the issue of 1 March 1929. Consequently, the document could not have been written before mid-December 1928 nor later than early January 1929.

The position defended in this document and presented earlier in Roy's Draft Resolution showed no departure from the basic structure of his analysis originally formulated at the time of the Second Congress and developed in his books *India in Transition* and *The Future of Indian Politics*. His view of British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie did not change. The former, faced with the crisis of capitalism since the war, was trying to stabilize itself through more intense exploitation of India and for this purpose it sought collaboration of the Indian bourgeoisie, but always retaining its own politico-economic control over the system. The latter, confronted with the rising tide of the revolutionary discontent of the masses since the war, was also keen on a partnership with the British in the exploitation of India, but in its turn it tried to utilize the mass-upheaval to gain advantage in its negotiations with the British. Protection, economic concessions, pressures and political reforms, a noticeable trend towards industrialization were some features of the process which was provisionally described by Bukharin and Roy in late 1927 as 'decolonization'. But Roy made it emphatically clear that 'decolonization might serve the interests of the bourgeoisie, but political independence and socio-economic emancipation of the people could be achieved only through a revolutionary struggle, which involved complete overthrow of foreign rule and native exploitation, and this struggle demanded a united front of workers, peasants and the radicalized section of the petty-bourgeoisie in the colonies.

The proceedings of the Congress show that under cover of theoretical arguments and debates a great deal of distortion, misrepresentation and double-talk went on. They reflected the power-manoeuvrings, manipulations and horsetrading which took place throughout 1928 and continued in 1929 till Bukharin's removal from all work in the Comintern (July 1929) and from the CPSU political bureau (November 1928). Curiously enough, Kuusinen's original draft on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial and Semi-Colonial countries was never published. In fact, according to one account, his co-rapporteur on this topic, Ercoli (P. Togliatti), had not been shown the draft at all. In conversation with another Comintern official, Togliatti complained: 'I haven't an idea what he (Kuusinen) is going to talk about. I haven't seen his theses' (Jane Degras, II, p. 453). In other words, much of the hot air in the Congress debates was produced by two drafts which had not been printed. But lines had been drawn—there were Stalin's henchmen and there were others who were either to be made to follow the Stalin line, or got rid of from positions of influence and authority. This Stalinization process met with some unsuccessful resistance in the Sixth Congress. The maligning of Roy was part of the bigger manoeuvre to destroy Bukharin who was already under attack by Schatzkin, Lominadze, Lozovsky Molotov and others. The version of the Theses on the Colonies that was finally adopted by the Congress was not free of ambiguities and inconsistencies. An English version was published in the form of a book by Workers Library Publishers, P. O. Box 148, Station D, New York City, in January 1929, under the title ***Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies*** (63 pages).

An important document from the archives of the Institute of Marxism–Leninism, Moscow, recently made available to me by the Institute's First Deputy Director, Dr V. P. Kuzmin, throws some light on the still fluid position in the period between the Ninth Plenum (February) and the Sixth Congress. Towards the end of the Plenum Roy had fallen seriously ill. His draft was not published. Instead, on 14 March *Inprecor* devoted its entire issue to a long article by Eugene Varga. 'Economics and Economic Policy in the Fourth Quarter of 1927'; the second section was titled 'India, the Focus of the British Empire' (*Inprecor*, Vol. VIII, No. 15, pp. 287–94). In this Varga argued that Britain was trying to arrest India's industrial development and treating it again as an agrarian appendage, and he criticized the view of Roy (as well as that of Rajni Palme Dutt whose views since 1926 were similar to Roy's). Varga's argument later became the basis of Kuusinen's attack on 'decolonization'. But at this stage opposition to Varga's argument was strong. The document of which I received a photocopy from Dr Kuzmin, along with his letter in Russian dated 23 March 1989, is in German and is marked 'strictly confidential' (*streng vertraulich*). It is an abstract of Protokill No. 73 of the session of the Politsecretariat of the ECCI held on 21.3.28. According to these confidential minutes, it was resolved that 'as continuing differences over a number of issues in the Commission on India set up to revise the draft for a Manifesto (presumably this is M. N. Roy's original draft of October 1927—SNR) tend to make that draft obsolete, it is now advisable to draw up a Resolution on the Indian question instead of a Manifesto. The charge for the preparation of this resolution rests with the old commissin which is now reorganized to consist of Comrades Schubin, Arnot, Roy (substitute Luhani), Masut, Petrowski and Schatzkin. Schubin responsible for the Commission. Allotted time 10 days. The Commission is further directed to see to it that Com. Roy, when it becomes possible for him, may recast the last draft for the Manifesto into an article for the *Communist International*'.

Roy, of course, could not take part in the reconstituted commission owing to his illness; but he did send his draft (which was originally conceived as a Manifesto) on March 24. It was not published. He was, however, ably deputized by Luhani who tried quite valiantly to defend its position against deliberate misrepresentation at the Sixth Congress, but eventually under pressure recanted and went over to the *apparatchiki*. Arnot and Petrovaski (Bennet) opposed Kuusinen, but although their view was closer to Roy's they disowned him at the Sixth Congress. Schatzkin was one of Stalin's men who had been accusing Bukharin since the Fifteenth Party Congress (December 1927) of 'glossing over the Rightist errors of foreign communist parties', he was known to be hostile to Roy. Masut (or Mazut) was a Soviet functionary (Philip Spratt suspected that he was a G.P.U. agent) who had been to India, met some communists and questioned them about Roy (M. Ahmad, *Myself and the CPI*, 1970, pp. 466–7; P. Spratt, *Blowing up India*, 1955, p. 40–43). But the significant new appointment was the Russian P. Schubin, a nominee of the *apparatchiki*. After Roy's articles ceased to find place in *Inprecor*, Schubin would rush to attack him in its pages in the issues of 29 March and 5 April 1929. By entrusting the responsibility of the newly constituted Commission to Schubin the Political Secretariat sought to ensure that the resolution would suit its requirements and misrepresentation of Roy's views would be made easier.

The *apparatchiki*'s handling of the Indian delegation at the Sixth Congress was also intriguing. Roy's two trusted colleagues, G.A.K. Luhani and Mohammad Ali Sepassi, were denied voting rights, although Luhani did speak several times repudiating Kuusinen's malicious interpretation of 'decolonization'. But full voting right was given to the neophyte Saumyendranath Tagore (speaking under the assumed name Narayan), Mohammad Shafiq Siddiqi (Raza) and Shaukat Usmani (Sikander Sur), all three of whom were openly hostile to Roy. According to both Philip Spratt (*Blowing up India*, pp. 41–2) and Muzaffar Ahmad (*The Communist Party of India and its Formation Abroad* pp. 93–4; *Myself and the Communist Party of India 1920–29*, pp. 444–54), Usmani went to the Sixth Congress against the express instruction of the CPI. Spratt, in fact, cabled the London office in reply to its inquiry that Usmani did not represent the CPI. According to Muzaffar Ahmad, Usmani went to Moscow in the company of Mohammad Shafiq, Habib Ahmad Nasim and Masood Ali Shah, with forged letters of introduction and Iranian passports secured for them by Masood Ali Shah who subsequently proved to have been a British intelligence agent all along. Usmani was neither a theorist nor an organizer of much ability although he had been a communist since 1921 and had been convicted in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case. His speeches at the Congress (*Inprecor*, VIII, 44, 68, 78) betrayed his appalling ignorance of Marxism and incapacity for coherent thinking, but he was absolutely emphatic in his denunciation of Roy and 'decolonization', and support to the official line. According to Usmani's own account he reached Moscow with his companions in the last week of June 1928, and 'was pushed into the Presidium' (Shaukat Usmani, *Historic Trips of a Revolutionary: Sojourn in the Soviet Union*, New Delhi, 1977, p. 91). Stalin and his operators obviously wanted a 'yes-man' from India, however temporarily, to be displayed at the Congress as a distinguished member of the Presidium.

In view of his mysterious travels and arrival at the right moment and unmerited prominence it is difficult not to wonder if these too might not have been arranged by Piatnitsky and others in advance. According to Muzaffar Ahmad, in the early twenties Usmani had worked in India on behalf of Roy's rivals to undermine Roy's authority and influence. In 1928 'he went to Moscow with the aim of ousting M. N. Roy and stepping, if possible, into the vacancy' (*Myself and the CPI*, p. 453). Usmani was not only elected to the Presidium, but made a co-rapporteur on the colonial question, together with Ercoli (Togliatti). After the Congress he spent some time in a clinic, 'regained his health', returned to India early in 1929, was arrested in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy Case. He learnt in jail that Masood Ali Shah and Habib Ahmad Nasim had been arrested and executed as British spies in the Soviet Union, suffered a nervous breakdown, and was expelled from the Party in 1932. But in 1928 he had served Stalin's purpose and, as he himself later recorded, the greatest experience of his life was to have met Stalin (Shaukat Usmani, *I Met Stalin Twice*, Bombay, 1953).

Roy's powerful rivals and enemies had done everything possible to besmirch him during his absence, but that he carried some authority (even after having lost his official Comintern positions at the Sixth Congress) at least until the end of 1928 is indicated by the fact that Dr G. Adhikari (who later emerged as one of the chief theorists of the CPI), arrived in India in December 1928 as Roy's Representative and declared himself as such to the Communists in India (M. Ahmad, *Myself and the CPI*, p. 454–5). Of course, he soon abandoned Roy and climbed on the bandwagon. He proved himself to be a skilful exponent of the official Moscow line in India and a vigorous critic of Roy. In the *Documents of the History of the CPI* which he was editing in several volumes during the last years of his life, Adhikari repeatedly accused Roy of 'left sectarianism' and deviation. R. Palme Dutt, whose view was also under attack at the Sixth Congress, saved himself by promptly admitting his error. According to a letter which he wrote to Muzaffar Ahmad on 4 April 1960 recollecting the events of 1928, Roy visited Palme Dutt at Brussels after the Congress (which neither of them had attended), and 'I informed him that I considered the criticisms and line of the 6th Congress to be correct' (*Myself and CPI*, p. 480). Roy refused to disown or amend the view which he had held since the Second Congress, nor would he accommodate the *apparatchiki* by remaining silent. In a short while not only were all Comintern avenues closed to Roy, but he became an object of malicious attack in the Comintern organs and of whispering campaign of slander by the 'linie', especially in India and Great Britain.

SNR.

On the Indian Question in the Sixth World Congress

The polemic against the so-called theory of 'decolonization' cast a shadow of unreality over the otherwise high class discussion of the Indian question in the Sixth World Congress. Therefore it is necessary to begin with a few remarks about this theory: more correctly, about the scarecrow of this so-called theory.

I do not propose to answer the polemics of Comrade Kuusinen and others. It will not be possible to correct the inaccuracies of facts cited in Comrade Kuusinen's report within the limits of an article. If necessary I will be prepared to do so on a future occasion. For the present it is sufficient to observe that Comrade Kuusinen was not well advised as regards facts. It is not the picture of the India of 1928, but of a quarter of a century ago that he drew before the Congress. This he was bound to do because of his admitted 'lack of the necessary knowledge of the entire subject'. But he was certainly extravagant in imagination, if he sought to accuse me of having ever maintained, openly or by implication, that imperialism under any circumstance could be a progressive factor in the colonies. Happily, in the corrected version of his concluding speech he emphatically stated that he did not identify 'this false theory [of decolonization] of our comrades' with the 'apology of colonial regime made by the lackeys of imperialism'. This eleventh hour statement, however, does not alter the fact that in his report he asserted that the comrades who maintained that there was a change in the economic policy of British imperialism in India, 'even visualize decolonization of India by British imperialism'. This is a misreading and misinterpretation of what I wrote ever in this connection. The very passages quoted by Comrade Kuusinen to condemn me as an apologist of imperialism, prove that I do not hold the opinion that British imperialism will lead the Indian people by the hand to freedom. What I pointed out is that owing to the decay of capitalism in the metropolis, imperialism is obliged to find means and methods of exploiting India more intensively, and is thereby creating a situation which weakens its very foundation.

Comrade Kuusinen asked: if it is so, why is British imperialism doing such a thing? This is a very simple way of looking at the situation. It is trying to understand the operation of capitalism (in its highest stage of imperialism) separated from its inner contradictions. In the light of such simple logic Marx also becomes ridiculous by virtue of having said that capitalism creates its own grave-digger in the form of the proletariat. If capitalist mode of production lays down the conditions for socialism why did the bourgeoisie introduce it in society? These apparent contradictions are explained by Marxian dialectics.

To have a correct appreciation of the situation it is necessary to distinguish between the subjective and objective forces operating upon it. British imperialism does not with to lose an iota of its power in India. This is the subjective factor which has very great significance; but it alone is not decisive. The objective factor, that is, what, in the given situation, is possible for the British bourgeoisie to do to maintain their domination in India and the effect of what they do, reacts upon the subjective force.

If the subjective were the decisive factor, there would never be a revolution, for the ruling class would never want to abdicate its power. There is, of course, the opposing subjective which wants to overthrow the existing order. But its wish alone is not sufficient. It can be realized when other objective forces are in operation on the situation. The degeneration of the ruling class, the decay of its system of production and the decomposition of its state-power are the objective conditions for a successful revolution. The establishment by a close analysis of facts that these objective conditions are maturing in India, in spite of the desire of British imperialism, does not prove, as Comrade Kuusinen said, that 'our conception of the nature of the imperialist colonial politics should be revised'. On the contrary, Marxist and Leninist conception of the nature of imperialism does not exclude the maturing of conditions indicating degeneration, disorganization and decay of imperialism as preliminary to its final overthrow. Otherwise, it would not be a revolutionary conception of the dynamics of the situation, but a static view without any perspective.

As is evident from the very passages quoted by Comrade Kuusinen, I used the term 'decolonization' (within inverted commas, because it is not my creation) in the sense that imperialist power is undermined in India creating conditions for its successful revolutionary overthrow. India is a colony of the classical type. She will never cease to be a colony until the British power is overthrown by revolutionary means. No compromise (however far-reaching) between the Indian bourgeoisie and the British imperialists will give real freedom to the Indian people. These are all truism. But it is also true that India of today is not the India of a quarter of a century ago. It is simply ignoring facts to maintain that the Indian bourgeoisie is as economically suppressed and politically oppressed as twenty years ago. To recognize the fact that, simultaneously in spite of and with the sanction of imperialism. India now travels on a path of economic development closed to her previously, is not a violation of the Marxist and Leninist conception of the nature of imperialism. On the contrary, such developments are not foreign to this nature. Indeed Lenin did presage such developments in the colonies towards the latest stages of imperialist domination. In showing the ever-growing parasitic character of imperialism he approvingly quoted the following from Schulze-Gaevernitz's book: 'Europe will shift the burden of physical toil—first agricultural and mining, then of heavy industry—on the black races and will remain itself at leisure in the occupation of bondholder, thus paving the way for the economic and later the political emancipation of the coloured races' [*Imperialism*.][1]

What, after all, is imperialism? It is the domination and exploitation of the backward races by the bourgeoisie of other capitalist countries. It is so, as far as the colonies are concerned. Imperialism, as a whole, has a much wider scope. That, however, does not directly concern us here. For the purpose of dominating and exploiting the colonial people the same means and methods are not, cannot be, applicable always. The object of the imperialist rulers is to get the greatest possible profit out of the colonies. How this profit is derived is immaterial. The way British finance capital gets profit out of its Canadian and Australian possessions is different from the way it does the same from the east and west African colonies. The methods of exploitation applied in these are again not the same as in India. The change takes place not only from place to place but from time to time as well. The methods of deriving profits from Canada or Australia today are not the same as they were previously. There is no reason why the same change should not take place in India, if the interest of imperialism demands it or the exigencies of imperialism force it.

Instead of considering imperialism as something unchangeable, static, a Marxist should examine it dialectically. By doing that we shall find its weakness more clearly, and thus be able to fight it more effectively. In this examination one should not squabble over the exact number of proletariat and blast-furnaces in India. What is to be established is the general tendency. Is India politically and economically exactly in the same position as twenty-five years ago? Can the means and methods of exploitation applied at the period meet the present requirement of British imperialism? Has there been any inner change in the position of British imperialism which forces it to adopt new means and methods of deriving profit from India? Is post-war imperialism in the position to continue colonial exploitation in the pre-war forms? These are the vital questions to be answered; and the correct answer could be found only by an unprejudiced examination of facts of the situation as it is.

Obviously, the crux of the question is the internal condition of

British capitalism. This was hardly touched in the discussion of the Indian question in the Congress.

Colonial politics suitable to the interests of British capitalism before the war cannot meet the situation in which British capitalism finds itself today in consequence of the war. Modern empires are built on capital exported from the metropolis. Britain's ability to export capital depends primarily on the conditions of her industries at home. Therefore, an analysis of the economic situation in Britain should be the starting point of serious discussion of the Indian question.

Capital is exported from a country when it is 'overdeveloped', that is, when all the accumulated surplus cannot be invested there at sufficient profit. Investment in countries where capital is scarce, price of land relatively small, wages are low and raw materials are cheap, brings higher profits (Lenin, *Imperialism*).[2] How is the position of Britain today as regards export of capital? If the facts give an affirmative answer to this question, then we may not look for a far-reaching change in the imperialist policy. For, in that case, imperialism would be still in its 'normal' condition. But a different picture in Britain will necessarily mean a readjustment in imperial relations.

It is an established fact that Britain suffers from under-production. Her actual production is much lower than her productive capacity. In other words, Britain produces much less than she could produce. This forced limitation of production has been caused by shrinkage of market as a result of the war and growth of industries in other countries. Since the conclusion of the war the total volume of British exports has never exceeded 80 per cent of the pre-war level. In contrast to this the British export trade expanded uninterruptedly during the period between 1880 and 1913. And it was in this period of trade prosperity that the empire was built up and consolidated. An expanding export of manufactured goods (and by far the largest portion of Britain's export has always been manufactured goods) was the main channel for the export of capital which, in its turn, founded and cemented the empire. Therefore, a decline of the export trade is bound to affect the solidity of the empire, unless some other means were found to counteract the weakness resulting therefrom. In other words, the colonial policy evolved in the period of prosperity no longer suits imperialist interests when the conditions on which that policy was based have changed. The colonies acquired and kept as reserve during the period of prosperity should now be so exploited as to make up for the decline in the home country.

What will be the result of this policy, whether it will not ultimately defeat the very object with which it is launched, is a different question. The point here at issue is that changed conditions in the metropolis render the continuation of the old methods of colonial exploitation disadvantageous, and force upon the imperialist bourgeoisie a new policy irrespective of what they would rather prefer.

On the question of the ultimate consequence of this policy, my contention is and has been that the new policy will create conditions which will facilitate the disruption of the empire. To deduce from this clearly Marxist contention that I am of the opinion that the British bourgeoisie will willingly 'decolonize' India is simply absurd. What I said and what can be maintained without slightly violating the Marxist and Leninist views of imperialism, is that what undermines imperialist monopoly and absolutism, inevitably operates as a 'decolonizing' force as far as India is concerned.

Now, if the fall in Britain's export trade were a temporary phenomenon, then, it could not produce far-reaching consequences. So it is necessary to examine more closely the nature and extent of the present crisis of British capitalism. Authoritative capitalist economists themselves have admitted that it is not a passing phenomenon. It is admitted that the present crisis cannot be overcome in the 'normal' course of events. For example, the Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee in its report published a few months ago remarks: 'Our exports have been obstinately stagnant in the post-war period and show no clear signs of any big recovery in the near future. The ominous nature of the situation becomes more evident when it is known that this admittedly permanent decline affects particularly the key-industries, namely, coal, iron and steel, cotton and shipbuilding; and these industries supply more than half of Britain's export trade.' Discussing the depression in these key-industries the Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee observes: 'We cannot be sure that our staple trades will revive to their old dimensions.' The grave significance of this situation can be fully judged when it is kept in mind that these staple industries were 'the chief contributors to our export trade; and their expansion in the last century was the basis of our national development as a foreign-trading and foreign-investing nation'. (Ibid.)

Similar opinions testifying to the permanence of industrial depression in Britain are forthcoming from other equally competent sources. So, not being a passing phenomenon, it is bound to produce abiding consequences. The situation is particularly pregnant, for the process of decay has attacked the most vital spots, precisely those industries whose development contributed to Britain's growth as a foreign-investing (that is, imperialist) nation.

Let us examine the consequences of this basic fact in some details. The condition for the export of capital from a given country is its possession of more capital than can be invested at home at a sufficiently high rate of profit. The period, in which this condition obtained in Britain, coincided with the period of gigantic expansion of export trade. Between 1880 and 1913 the total amount of British capital invested abroad increased from 800 million pounds to 3,500 million pounds. Industrial prosperity at home led to enormous accumulation of capital all of which could not be profitably absorbed inside the country. It was so much so in Britain that since the eighties of the last century the amount of capital exported from Britain rose steadily every year till in 1903 it exceeded the amount invested at home. Ever since 1903 the ratio of capital exported to that invested at home increased year by year, until the war disturbed the situation. Of the total capital issues in London in the period between 1903 and 1913 about three quarters were for overseas investment. In the year immediately before the war broke out, the amount of capital exported by Britain was approximately 150 million pounds, whereas 36 millions were invested at home.

The picture changes after the war. The volume of overseas investment (including colonial) showed a decrease absolutely, and what is very important for our analysis, relatively to home investment. According to the editor of the *Economist*, Layton, (in his evidence before the Colwyn Committee on National Debt and Taxation) the total amount of capital exported in the five years preceding the war was 863 million pounds in contrast to 466 millions in the same period after the war. Post-war annual foreign issues amounted to 135 million pounds in contrast to the average 200 millions during the years immediately preceding the war. The proportion of the total issues meant for overseas investment was 88 per cent in 1912, 62 per cent in 1924 and 31 per cent in 1927. The tendency is to fall farther on.

One step further in the examination and we reach the source of the disease. Obviously, Britain exports less capital because in the post-war years she no longer possesses so much surplus capital as before the war. In other words, since the war, in Britain capital accumulates at a declining rate. It is not possible to find the exact extent of this decline. On the strength of several estimates made by competent authorities, the Colwyn Committee came to the conclusion that the total of the net national savings of Britain in 1924 was approximately 475 million pounds as against 375 in 1913. Considering the fall in the value of money the figure should have been 650 to maintain the pre-war level. As it is, it shows a drop of over 30 per cent in the rate of accumulation. 'The real savings exhibit a decline which may amount in present money values to something like 150 to 200 million pounds a year.' (*Report of the Colwyn Committee.*) Now, the needs of the home industry (refitting of the old, and starting of the new to make up for the incurable slump in the old) absorb such a large proportion of the depleted accumulation that the surplus for export gets smaller. Thus, the very roots of British imperialist structure are in a state of decay. This must affect the entire structure, and the imperialist bourgeoisie must make a desperate effort to find new means to support the undermined edifice. In their frantic effort to stabilize a tottering structure they will hasten its collapse. Nevertheless, they must make the effort, otherwise they would not be what they are—they would not be bourgeoisie.

The decline of the rate of accumulation together with the increased demand for home consumption leaves very little capital for export. The following table illustrates the situation as compared with what it was before the war.

	1913	1924 (in millions of pounds)	1927
Total issues	245.5	475	450.8
Home investment	49.7	350	314.6
Exported	195.5	125	135.2

Presently it will be shown that the figures of foreign issue in these years do not represent the actual amount of capital exported, which is very much less.

With this knowledge of the inner condition of British capitalism one can explain why the flow of British capital to India subsided since 1923. The fact that since 1923 British capital exported into India was reduced year after year and it reached an insignificant level, does not prove the hostility of the British bourgeoisie to any change of economic policy in India. The slackening in the tempo of industrial development in India is due to the fact that British imperialism is not in a position to provide the capital required for it. Its scheme is to mobilize the capital resources of India for the purpose. This is a very dangerous adventure, and the imperialist bourgeoisie must go slowly. There is, however, no change in the policy. There cannot be any change; for the policy is not the choice of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Inner contradictions of capitalism, accentuated by changed conditions, have forced it upon them. Lenin wrote: ‘Capitalism, in its imperialist phase, arrives at the threshold of the complete socialization of production. To some extent it causes the capitalists, whether they like it or not, to enter a new social order, which marks the transition from free competition to the socialization of production’ (*Imperialism*).[3] As the capitalist mode of production, in course of its development, creates the basis of socialist society, so it is also possible that imperialism, in its last stages, is forced to adopt such methods and forms of colonial exploitation as strike a death-blow to the very colonial regime.

In consequence of the fact that in the post-war years capital has been accumulating in the possession of the British bourgeoisie at a declining rate they are obliged to export capital in decreasing amounts. The check of the flow of capital to India in the last years is a reflection of this general decrease in the export of capital from Britain. The Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee reports: 'the margin which remains available for making fresh investments abroad is materially lower than it used to be. In the last four years our surplus for foreign investment has been fully 100 millions per annum less, not only than it was before the war, but also than it was so lately as 1922–23.' As the British bourgeoisie were obliged to devote the reduced exportable surplus, in the first place, to retain their control of the most vulnerable sections of the imperial front, very little was left for India. This fact, while immediately a check to the tempo of industrial development in India, renders the necessity of industrializing India more imperative. For, the whole imperial structure will crumble, unless the British bourgeoisie can find new sources of profit to set off the present decline in the rate of accumulation of capital at home, and India provides such a source if subjected to new forms of exploitation. The gap created by the industrial decay at home absorbs an ever-increasing portion of the income from abroad. These, in their turn, again, have also decreased. 'Our income from overseas investments was seriously impaired by the inroads which were made in these investments during the war in order to pay for munitions and necessary supplies from overseas.' (*Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee Report*). The report also testifies to a considerable fall in the real value of the income from shipping—another main source of income from abroad. Then, the operation of inter-allied war-debt payment leaves a debit account against Britain.

Fall of export has swollen the adverse balance of British foreign trade to very large dimensions. On the other hand, the income from external sources, with which the adverse balance of trade is met, has also decreased in real value. The position as compared to the pre-war year is as follows:[4]

	1913	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
	(in millions of pounds)						
Adverse trade balance	158	171	195	324	334	477	391
Net income from external sources	339	360	373	410	388	465	465
Net Surplus available for Investment abroad	181	189	178	86	54	−12	74

This table shows that while the adverse trade balance has increased by nearly 150 per cent since 1913, the increase in the net income from abroad has been only 37 per cent. The consequence of this disparity is a very serious inroad upon Britain's position as a foreign-investing, that is, imperialist country. For, this alarmingly declining 'surplus is the true measure of the net increase of our ownership of capital abroad'. (Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee.) The slight recovery in the last year does not represent the reality of the situation. The adverse trade balance is slightly decreased not as a result of an increased export, but of reduced import. Then the small increase of export in 1927 does not even make up for the heavy drop in the previous year. Indeed the two years' average touches the lowest level of export. Further British imports being chiefly raw materials, their reduction will mean a further fall of export in the next year.

From the above facts it is evident that Britain's ability to export capital has become very limited. Nevertheless, new foreign issues in London since 1925 show a tendency to increase. This is a new problem: where does the capital come from? The following table illustrates the anomalous situation.

	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
	(in millions of pounds)					
Net surplus from abroad	189	178	86	54	–12	74
Actual foreign issues	135	136	134	88	112	139

This table shows that until 1923 the foreign issues were within the limits of the exportable surplus. Since then the limits have been exceeded. This could have been done either by depriving the home industries of necessary capital or by transference to other centres of world finance (mainly New York) of foreign bonds held in London. If the former were the case, then it would prove that the parasitic nature of imperialism had developed to the extent of eating into its own vitals. But it could not be entirely so, for such large amounts of capital could not be sent abroad except through an increase of the export trade, which has not been the case in the last years. So the new foreign issues, at least the major portion of them, in the last years, must have represented transference of foreign securities, and, therefore were the measures not of an increase but decrease of Britain's ownership of capital abroad. The ominous nature of the increasing foreign issues becomes still more evident when it is known that according to the calculation of Kindersley, President of the National Savings Committee, made on the basis of informations received from 60 British banks and 160 companies, *only 86 million pounds were available in 1927 for the purpose of investment both at home and abroad.* On the strength of all these facts it can be concluded that since 1924 British capital invested abroad has decreased by well over 300 million.

Now, let us see how this alarmingly grave crisis of British imperialism affects its relation with India. Only from this perspective could we get a correct view of the situation. Any examination of the relation between India and British imperialism except in the light of the position of the latter as a whole is bound to be superficial. British policy in India is essentially determined by the internal conditions of British imperialism as a whole. It is not based on any other principle than to extract the greatest possible amount of booty. At present British imperialism must squeeze more out of India than ever. The profits cannot be appreciably augmented by the old methods of colonial exploitation. On the contrary, the old policy of keeping India forcibly in economic backwardness has been lately reducing the value produced by the Indian masses for the benefit of British imperialism.

At present India has to export as much as before the war to buy much less. This is due to the disparity between the prices of agricultural products, which comprise the bulk of her exports, and manufactured goods which she imports. For example, now India imports cotton goods ten per cent less, in volume, than before the war. Agricultural production per capita also shows a decline.

And, to maintain her position as a first class imperialist power, Britain has lately been obliged to write off a considerable portion of the diminishing profit from India. The amount of tribute from India can be raised essentially on one condition, the production of greater value by the Indian toiling masses. This can be done only by application of advanced means of production. In other words, with primitive agriculture as her main industry India cannot produce for British imperialism the increased revenue that is required by the latter to repair the decay of its foundation. Therefore modernization of the means and methods of production in India has become the policy of imperialism.

The result of this policy is clearly visible to a Marxist. It will not only defeat its own object; but it will hasten the collapse of imperialism. And precisely therefore the consequence of this policy can be characterized as having a 'decolonizing' significance. It is simply absurd to say that recognition of the far-reaching effect of the new economic policy forced upon British imperialism by its inner crisis is analogous to the belief that imperialism is becoming a progressive force. Such arguments may be useful for demagogic polemics; but it certainly betrays the ignorance of Marxian dialectics.

Neither from the point of view of Marxian theories (their application to the realities of a given situation—not their quotation as dead formulas) nor on the basis of the facts can it be proved that political and economic conditions in post-war India are the same as before the war. Nor can it be disproved that these changes have occurred and are occurring with the sanction of and under the guidance of imperialism. The march of India from the state of 'dependency' towards that of a 'dominion' is a fact. How long the march will last is a different question. The decisive feature of the situation is that under the present conditions it is advantageous for imperialism to transform India from an economically backward to an industrially developed higher type of colony producing greater revenue. Failure to see these essential characteristics of the situation will prevent us from determining correctly our tactics in the struggle against imperialism.

The tribute from India constitutes a considerable portion of the British income abroad. It is difficult to ascertain exactly the amount of revenue derived by British imperialism from India. On the basis of plausible estimates made by various people the rate at present could be calculated at 150 million pounds a year.

A close scrutiny of Britain's international balance of payment reveals the fact that the entire income from external sources is not usually accounted for therein. A reserve is kept, which is not shown in the published accounts.[5] It can be assumed that a large portion of the income from India is put on the reserve account. For example, in the last several years only 15 million pounds were put under the head 'Receipts from Services' (Estimate of the *Journal of the Board of Trade*), while at least 20 million were derived from India alone on the same accounts. Further, the declining line of Britain's international credit touched the bottom in 1925, the international balance sheet showing debit of 12 million in 1926. Nevertheless, next year there was shown a credit of 74 million which was increased even to 96 million in a revised account of the board of trade published in the middle of 1928.[6] But the improvement in the balance of actual trade did not correspond with the rise of credit, and the income from the external sources was shown to be the same as in the previous year. Whence did the increased credit come? The reserve, in which considerable portion of the revenue from India is put, must have been drawn upon to restore the equilibrium of the international balance-sheet as published. All these prove that a lot of bookkeeping jugglery throws a veil over the actual state of Britain's foreign income.

Whatever may be the case, one thing is certain, that an ever-increasing portion of the revenue from India has of late been absorbed to check the catastrophic fall in Britain's international credit. In this situation it becomes a pressing necessity to increase the revenue from India. Irremediable slump of the export trade and the resulting decline of British capital invested abroad seriously reduce the possibility of augmenting, even of maintaining the level of, the income from countries in which the operation of the forces of production is not completely dictated by British imperialism. The reserves of the empire must be drawn upon. Hence the scheme of 'empire development', and India is given the most important place in that scheme. For, on the one hand, the application of this scheme to the self-governing part of the empire (Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc.) does not depend entirely upon the desire of the British bourgeoisie, and, on the other hand, in the more backward outskirts of the empire (new African colonies) the application of this scheme will not immediately produce results of effective importance. Therefore, the largest and most precious jewel of the British crown must live up to its reputation. India must be economically developed to serve Britain's imperialist interests. Her enormous potential riches (accumulated wealth and wasted labour power) should be harnessed. This cannot be done unless her productive capacity is freed from the antiquated means and methods of colonial exploitation.

India pays her tribute to imperialism in the shape of her excess export. The surplus of her export over import, in the present conditions, represents what is taken away from her without giving anything in return. The balance of India's international trade was upset for the first time in 1920. In that year India's imports exceeded her exports to the extent of 790 million rupees.

The average of surplus export in the five years preceding had been 780 million. Similar situations continued in the following year, causing terrible alarm for the imperialists. India was on the verge of bankruptcy. She failed to pay her 'debts' to the colonial overlords. The antiquatedness of the pre-war forms of colonial exploitation stood revealed. It became clear that India must be allowed to raise her productive capacity, if she were to continue as a profitable domain of British imperialism. It was precisely in the years 1920–21, when India's bankruptcy became evident, that decisions were taken by imperialism to discard antiquated forms in favour of advanced ones for exploiting India.

Far-seeing leaders of imperialism had already during the war been pointing out the need for a new course. As early as 1915, Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India, had impressed upon the British government, that after the war India must be helped to become an industrial country. The Indian Industrial Commission set up in 1916, on the above initiative of the Viceroy, in its report published two years later recommended that in the future the government should play an active role in the industrial development of India; that the raw products of India should be manufactured in the country into articles necessary in peacetime as well as in war; that agriculture should be modernized; that the government must abandon the old policy of '*laissez faire*'; and that all the available capital resources of India should be tapped for the purpose. The Reforms Act of 1919, which introduced political conditions entirely unknown in pre-war India, also incorporated the new tendency. The Montagu–Chelmsford Report, which constituted the basis of the Act, contained the following:

> As the desirability of industrial expansion became clearer, the Government of India fully shared the desire of the Indian leaders to secure the economic advantages that would follow local manufactures of raw products . . . If the resources of the country are to be developed, the government must take action . . . After the War the need for industrial development will be all the greater . . . On all grounds, a forward policy in industrial development is urgently called for to give India economic stability . . . Imperial interests also demand that the natural resources of India should henceforth be better utilized. We cannot measure the access of strength which an industrial India will bring to the power of the Empire . . . The Government must admit and shoulder its responsibility for furthering the industrial development of the country.

In 1922 the government set up the Fiscal Commission with an Indian industrial magnate as the chairman, and by accepting, in the beginning of the next year, its findings, that protective tariff should be introduced to help Indian industries, revised the traditional colonial policy formulated, in the words of Pitt—'not a nail should be manufactured there'—in the mercantilist days with reference to the American colonies. The transformation of the British economic policy in India is testified by the fact that 'protectionism' has replaced free trade. When British trade with India is on the decline, its freedom, maintained at the expense of India, no longer suits imperialist interest. As previously free trade meant industrial backwardness for India, now its reversion to protectionism must have the opposite effect.

Again be it emphasized that what is important to establish is the dynamics of the situation. The dominating tendency must be noticed. The obstacles to the full realization of the policy, caused by other factors, do not disprove that the policy is there. While up to the war the policy of the British Indian government was to collect a customs duty *exclusively for revenue purposes* not exceeding 5 per cent *ad valorem*, since the war the average level of the tax on imports has risen from 7.5 per cent in 1918 to 11 per cent in 1921, 15 per cent in 1922, 18 per cent in 1924 and it is nearly 20 per cent at present. The duty on iron and steel manufactures is still higher;(a) besides, the industry in the country receives a bounty from the State. The result of protection to the iron and steel industry, the growth of which is the basic condition for the industrial development of a country, is noticeable from the following table.

Production in India

	(in thousand of tons) Pig-iron	Steel
1913	207	32
1920	316	159
1924	891	340
1925	894	456
1926	927	457[b]

Although, owing to the operation of factors outside India, the tempo of industrialization has been somewhat retarded since 1924–25, there has been a jump in the production of iron and steel which lays down the conditions for an acceleration of the tempo in the near future. The potentiality of the situation is all the greater because this relatively considerable rise in the production of iron and steel takes place in India when their production in Britain declines or stagnates. That there is a consummate policy of industrialization, applied with caution so that the relation between India and Britain is not suddenly thrown out of gear, can be proved with abundant evidence. For instance, speaking in the Indian Council of State on the Steel Protection Bill (26 January 1922) the government spokesman, Charles Innes said:

'It is hoped to make the industry much stronger by attracting new capital and by inducing new firms to engage in it. Already India made the cheapest pig-iron, and we can look forward to the time when India will become an exporter of steel'.

In 1926, 150,000 tons of pig-iron were exported to Japan from India.(c) The price was 37 shillings 6 pence per ton. At the same time the price in Britain was 79 shillings 6 pence. Obviously, industrialization of India will help Britain to maintain her place in international trade.

[a] The import duty has since been still increased, and other industries, for example, sugar, have received the benefit of protection. M.N.R.

[b] The production has continued to increase during the following year. M.N.R.

[c] The export of pig-iron has increased. Lately, it has been exported to Britain itself. M.N.R.

The hope with which British imperialism adopted a new policy in the exploitation of India was not misplaced, as far as its immediate consequences are concerned.

'India has now become an important factor in the international trade in pig-iron, and has thus not only gained for herself a practically complete independence of all other countries as regards pig-iron, but has also become a very large exporter. The first stage, that is, the production of pig-iron in the use of enormous natural resources has thus been successfully passed.'

(*British Board of Trade Journal*, 9 September 1926)

When it is known that India's deposit of iron-ores has been estimated at 2832 million tons, this 'successful' first stage opens up before imperialism a very encouraging perspective. This enormous potential riches converted into commodities at such a low cost that it could be sold at a price less than half of the British level, will mean indeed a very great 'access of strength' for the Empire. So industrialization of India, in this period of capitalist decay in Britain, rationalization of colonial exploitation, so to say, is not incompatible with the basic principles of imperialism.

The severe crisis of 1921–1922 was tided over. The balance of India's foreign trade was superficially restored. It was done not so much by an increase of export as by a forced reduction of imports. Owing to India's inability to meet her 'obligations', Britain was obliged to sell her less. This patchwork on the untenable relation between India and Britain had an unfavourable effect on the conditions of British industries. The limitation of the Indian market put an end to the post-war boom in Britain. The great increase in India's import trade—3,350 million rupees in 1922 as compared to 1,910 million in 1921—indicated a large export of British capital into India. To restore the balance of trade India's imports were reduced to 2,410 million rupees in 1923. The consequence was shown in the drop of British capital exported to India. Since then the situation has essentially been the same in which the channel of British capital to flow into India is restricted in addition to the basic fact that Britain's exportable surplus of capital is also very limited. In 1926 the exports regained its pre-war level, but the imports still remained very far from recovery. Remarking on this stage of things the official report says:

> At present, about three-quarters of Indian export consists of agricultural produce, and the same proportion of her imports is made up of manufactured goods. With the existing disparity between the price of agricultural and industrial products, it is obvious that India has to make a greater productive effort, than she formerly did in order to secure the same volume of imports. [*India in 1927–28.*]

The reason for a change of the economic policy of imperialism in India is stated in the above quotation. The productive power of India must be increased, otherwise her capacity to buy will go down. The trade relation between India and Britain which is the main channel through which the latter extracts tributes from former, can no longer be maintained in a state favourable to imperialism unless India can consume more commodities, and export enough to leave a considerable margin after the value of imports has been covered. The steady decline of British trade with India has been the cause of widespread alarm in the imperialist camp. Commenting on the subject, the organ of the most diehard section of the British bourgeoisie, those who are opposed to any change in the relation between India and Britain, wrote: 'Trade is the life and purpose of the Indian empire; if we lose that trade, we have neither the power nor the incentive to remain in India.' (*Morning Post*, London, 19 January 1926.) The paramount importance of trade is recognized not only by the mercantilists, but even by the financial and heavy industrial magnates whose views (in addition to those of the landed aristocracy) the *Morning Post* represents. From another section of the bourgeoisie views are also expressed appreciating the supreme importance of Indian trade for the empire and suggesting that revolutionary measures should be adopted to enlarge this trade. Discussing the prospects of 'imperial development' the Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee writes in its *Report*:

> It must be enormously to our advantage to encourage the growth of Indian prosperity and Indian trade. India's chief need is an increase of the purchasing power of her vast but poverty-stricken population . . . Anything which adds to the gross income of India, adds to the trade of the world, and particularly of this country. At present India is endeavouring to achieve this end by stimulating manufactures behind a protective tariff . . . For the increase of Indian prosperity, a great expansion of capital investment for the equipment of the country with scientific means of production is required . . .

Britain's export trade today is full 20 per cent below the pre-war level causing a chronic depression of industry at home. This, in its turn, causes a decline in the rate of accumulation hindering the flow of capital abroad which could be the means of expanding the foreign market. There will be absolutely no way out of this vicious circle, if British imperialism fails to exploit the colonial market at an increasing rate. Its monopoly even on the colonial market has of late been seriously threatened by new industrial countries with greater competing power. The following table illustrates how Britain is losing ground to others in the Indian market.

Proportion of India's Imports

	1913	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926
From Britain	63 p.c.	51	61	57	60	58	53	51	50

India's exports to Britain proportionally declined from 31 per cent in 1913 to 21 per cent in 1925. So, British monopoly on the Indian market as well as on her source of raw materials, is seriously attacked. It can no longer be maintained in its old forms. Promotion of production in India under the hegemony of imperialist finance capital, is the new form the monopoly should assume under the new conditions of capitalist decay in the metropolis. Thus, the measures introduced by imperialism to maintain its monopoly will have a 'decolonizing' effect in so far as they will shift India from the state of economic stagnation to that of industrial development.

Discussing the report of Indian Agricultural Commission which recommends measures for the rationalization of agriculture with the object of increasing its productivity, the *Economist* (11 August 1928) declares bluntly that 'British rule is nearing the end of its utility'. What is meant by this statement? It would be naïve to believe that the most authoritative, well-informed and sensible organ of British capitalism suggests an auto-liquidation of imperialism. What it suggests is that the old type of colonial rule has outlived its usefulness; it should now be replaced by a new form compatible with the changed conditions.

A close examination of India's foreign trade throws more light on the situation. As observed above, the surplus of India's export is the medium through which colonial tributes are transferred to Britain. The state of this export—its source, intrinsic value and distribution—is, therefore, of great significance.

Now, on the basis of various estimates, the interests, profits, dividends, commissions, etc., on the total British capital invested in India can be approximately calculated to be between 1,000 and 1,200 millions of rupees. (These estimates apply only to the post-war years). The following table shows that the net surplus of India's exports, in the post-war years, has never covered this. The relative increase during the years 1923 to 1925 was more than counterbalanced by the fact that in the years 1920 and 1921 there was no surplus, the scale having inclined heavily on the other side. So, in the situation as it is, a considerable portion of the imperialist tribute remains uncollected.

International Balance Sheet of India

	1913	1923	1924	1925	1926
		(In millions of rupees)			
Exports	2.490	3.490	3.892	3.853	3.095
Imports	1.910	2.410	2.432	2.242	2.302
Surplus of Export	580	1.080	1.460	1.611	793
Deduct value of gold and silver imported	370	400	943	519	393
Net surplus available for liquidating obligations abroad	210	680	517	1.092	400

The effective collection and its application for the accumulation of capital in the possession of the British bourgeoisie can take place either by its reinvestment in India or by increasing the surplus of India's export. If neither of these can be done, then, India must be declared an insolvent debtor. That is, in that case it would be evident that the recovery from the crisis of 1920–21 has been but superficial. The decline of Indian issues in London since 1923 proves that the uncollected tribute is not reinvested in India. Before the war, even after it up to 1923, reinvestment in India was the prevailing method of collecting that portion of Indian revenue which was not covered by surplus export. In those days, the Indian issues in London roughly corresponded with the uncollected tributes from India. In view of the fact that in the last years the collection through surplus export has not increased materially, except in the year 1925, it can be assumed that the decline of new Indian issues in London indicates that heavy inroads have been made upon the income from India to maintain the equilibrium of Britain's international balance sheet. This mysterious disappearance of a considerable portion of Indian revenue explains how the British Board of Trade showed an appreciable increase of the income from external sources in the last year after it had gone down beyond the zero level in 1926. British credit in India must have been written off to other imperialist countries in order to maintain Britain's position in the realm of international finance. This is a very serious situation. Industrial decay in Britain reduces her surplus of exportable capital. In addition to this, she is obliged to encroach heavily upon her Indian reserves to maintain international positions.

The above table illustrating India's international balance sheet reveals other features which render the situation still more alarming. For instance, by a forced reduction of imports an export surplus was created to tide over the crisis of 1920–21. Until the last year the imports did not reach anywhere near the 1921–22 level. This shows a lasting contradiction of the Indian market. Consequently, the inflated surplus dropped heavily again in 1926; for a restricted import could not but adversely affect the export trade. The world cannot buy from India except in exchange of commodities.

Another feature of India's foreign trade is that while the major part of her imports comes from Britain, her exports are largely taken by other countries. In 1926 about 51 per cent of her imports were supplied by Britain who, however, took only 21 per cent of her exports. Previously this disparity operated in favour of Britain. India's credit in other countries then represented so much British capital exported thereto. Now it is otherwise. Britain's surplus of exportable capital being insufficient, the countries buying from India pay her directly in commodities in ever-increasing amount. This means a progressive loss of the Indian market for Britain. That is, of late, an increasing volume of super-profit from India has been absorbed outside Britain. What is still worse for British imperialism is that the portion of India's surplus export to other countries, not covered by imports therefrom, now represents so much Indian capital exported outside the empire. Lately, growing Indian investments in American securities have occasioned much disquietude. Commenting on the subject, the *Economist* (6 October 1928) observes that 'at present wealthier Indians have extensive interests in foreign securities'. The cause of this diversion of Indian capital outside the empire, in the opinion of the journal, is the unattractiveness of the channels of investment in India. Therefore, the necessity of harnessing India's capital resources to counteract the declining accumulation in Britain—to check its flow outside the empire—forces upon British imperialism the previously undesirable and unsuitable policy of industrializing India. Otherwise the accumulated wealth of India will flow out of the empire, and the channel for this flow grows wider as the greater portion of India's exports must go to Britain's rivals. Imperialist monopoly is seriously shaken. The alternatives of the situation are to raise India to the level of a higher type of colony with productive forces less restricted than previously; or to allow her to deviate into the orbit of rival imperialist powers. The British bourgeoisie would be stupid indeed, should they make any mistake in choosing between these alternatives. They have not made the mistake. They have made the choice. They have adopted a policy, which in the long run is bound to have a suicidal repercussion upon themselves, under the pressure of conditions maturing in the period of capitalist decay.

But the crisis of British imperialism is so deep and complicated that there is no straight way out of it. There are many obstacles in the way of empire development through which the British bourgeoisie seek an exit out of the crisis. It is fraught with potential danger. Particularly is it so in India. Industrialization of India requires capital. Were Britain in a position to supply the required capital it would be an easy sailing; but in that case, it would not be necessary for British imperialism to launch upon the dangerous new policy in India. The problem is clearly put by the Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee in the following passage:

> 'The problem of imperial development has, however, been rendered far more acute by the very economic difficulties which make it at this moment doubly urgent and important.'

The inability of Britain to provide sufficient capital renders the industrialization of India a comparatively slow process. At the same time the policy of industrialization should be realized quickly enough so that it is not too late before its effects could improve Britain's position as a first class imperialist power. The problem can be solved by mobilizing India's capital resources under the hegemony of imperialist finance. The defeat of the India government on the question of the Reserve Bank indicated that the Indian bourgeoisie could not be drawn into the bargain on the terms of imperialism. But imperialism was not discouraged. It did not throw off the sponge. The policy of industrializing India was not scrapped. Only the tempo has been somewhat slowed down while the conditions for a rapid industrial development are being created. One of these conditions is a fair growth of the production of iron and steel inside the country. There are facts proving that this condition is being rapidly realized. The second condition is the rationalization of agriculture with the object, firstly, of raising the purchasing power of the upper strata of the peasantry and, secondly, of driving the poor peasants from their land.

The process of pauperization has reached the limit. India is bankrupt. To hang on blindly to the old policy would be to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. It would be a grave mistake on our part to have such a low estimate of imperialist intelligence. By enthusiastically welcoming the recommendations of the Indian Agricultural Commission imperialism shows its determination to act for the fulfilment of the second condition.

'Great capital projects already undertaken or in contemplation in India promise a rehabilitation of British trade. Rising standard of living in India is likely to accommodate English-made luxuries. The growing demand for machinery, industrial plants and materials for mechanical transport—caused *by the new policy of industrialization*—provides cause for hope.'

(Frederick Sykes in a speech recently made at Sheffield after his appointment as the next Governor of Bombay.)

So, neither facts, nor the perspective of the situation testifies that the policy of industrializing India has been essentially altered. As long as the conditions that forced the new policy upon imperialism are in operation, there cannot be any change of the policy. And those determining conditions have not changed. They operate more disastrously today than several years ago. They are created by the decay of the roots of British capitalism. Imperialism being the ramification of capitalism is bound to be affected by this decay at the latter's root.

Previously the India government as a rule borrowed large sums in London. Since 1923 practically no India government loan has been floated in the London market. On the other hand the amount of capital raised inside the country has increased considerably. While between the years 1919 and 1924 the total value of Government of India securities held in Britain rose from 225.5 million pounds to 326.7 million pounds, the value of those held in India increased from 132.7 to 341 million pounds. When, in addition to this, we take into consideration the fact that since 1923 the government of India has not borrowed in London, it becomes evident that the amount of capital raised in India is very much larger at present. This shows that the mobilization of India's capital resources, so essential for the full realization of the policy of industrialization, is going on. Then the absence of new Indian issues in London does not necessarily mean that no British capital is being invested in India. When any British company plans to undertake the building of an industrial plant or any other business enterprise in India, it does not always appear in the city for the required capital. Such companies are usually already connected with industry or trade in India, and as such, are owners of parts of the uncollected proceeds of British capital in India. And such investments are purely for productive purpose; for British capital invested in India as loans, bearing a fixed rate of interest, is always raised through an issue in London. The form of investment, not necessarily through an issue in London, is particularly suitable to the needs of the present situation. British capital invested in India through companies incorporated there with rupee capital, speedily multiplies itself by attracting Indian capital. This and other methods of mobilizing India's capital resources under the control of imperialist finance, have been put into force.

Although the determining factor is that the dynamics of the situation tend unmistakably and unwaveringly towards industrialization, the case might be still further strengthened by giving some facts about the actual growth of the leading industries. Figures about the growth of the production of iron and steel, the basis of modern industry, have already been given. Interpreted in relative terms those figures indicate that the production of pig-iron increased by 163 per cent between 1922 (when the protection was introduced) and 1926, in contrast with the growth of 67 per cent during the years 1913 to 1922—the period of excessive war-production; and steel production in the latter period grew by 200 per cent as compared to 170 per cent in the preceding period. In the end of 1926 the *British Board of Trade Journal* foresaw continued increase in the production of steel in India and observed that consumption of the steel produced would require erection of new industrial plants. In 1927, the rate of protection to the iron and steel industry was again increased, obviously to accelerate the process of its growth.[7] In addition to the considerably increased production in the country, structural steel imported in 1926 was 64 per cent more than in 1913. The value of the modern means of production (machinery, mill-workers, railway-plants, electric-prime-movers, etc.), as distinct from the means of transportation, as railway materials, in 1924 was four times as much as in 1913; after a slight downward curb in the following year, it regained the level in 1926 and exceeded it in the last year.

Further, the iron-ore extracted in 1926 was three times as much as in 1919, and most of it was subjected to manufacturing process inside the country. Indian mills now produce finished cloth more than double of what they did in 1913. India's export of finished textile materials increased simultaneously with the decrease in half-manufactured goods, namely yarns. This shows that the cotton industry has grown not only in expansion, but, what is much more important, in its internal composition. It is no longer an auxiliary to the industrial system in the imperialist metropolis supplying semi-finished raw materials. It has become an independent productive factor, self-sufficient and competitive.[8] Manufacture of tin-plates is not a basic industry. But its growth in India graphically illustrates the trend of new economic policy of imperialism. The production of this industry has increased more than four times since 1923 when it received the shelter of the tariff wall. A further increase of not quite a 100 per cent, and the level of present consumption in the country will be reached. Now, the manufacture of tin-plate requires very highly skilled labour, which is not available in India. Nevertheless, by the adoption on the American method of mass production, as against the old British system of production with skilled labour, the industry in India has developed with amazing rapidity.[9] The disparity in the wage-cost in Britain and India is so great that the Indian industry is expected to enter the world market with a very high competitive power even without protection after three years. The protection to this industry in India was granted in the teeth of strenuous opposition from the Welsh Tin-Plate Manufacturers' Association which controls the industry throughout Great Britain. But the influence of the

British Petroleum Trust was decisive. The tin-plate industry in India now serves as the connecting link between the British Petroleum Trust and the Indian iron and steel producers, Tata and Co.

Indeed, compared with vast expanse and population of India, the absolute significance of these figures is not very great. India still remains overwhelmingly an agricultural country. The historic significance of these figures is that they indicate the tendency. They show that the policy of imperialism is no longer to obstruct the industrial development of India. On the contrary, subject to the innumerable difficulties involved in it, the policy of imperialism at present is to foment industrial development of India. The very inner crisis of imperialism, which has obliged it to alter its methods of exploiting India, renders the process uneven and zigzag.

The facts, on the contrary, clearly and conclusively prove that the theory of 'agrarization' is utterly wrong. In his economic survey of the first quarter of the current year Comrade Varga[d] also came to similar conclusions. He wrote:

> We can affirm that statistical data establish the existense of tendencies towards industrialization which run contrary to the general tendency of capitalism to turn the colonies into areas of raw material production.' (*Inprecor,* English Ed, Vol. 8, No. 15).

Referring particularly to India he rejects the theory of agrarization and says:

> There can be no doubt that India is a more highly industrialized country now than it was fifty years ago. (Ibid.)[10]

Today India is more industrialized not only than she was fifty years ago, but than she was in 1922 which year marks the turning point in the imperialist policy—the year in which the former policy of free trade was discarded and protection was granted to Indian industries. And as this epoch-making event occurred since the Second World Congress of the Communist International, my view of the situation today is not a revision of the passage quoted by Comrade Kuusinen from the theses of the Second Congress. Estimation of the economic and political situation of the world or of a particular country cannot be absolute. It must be constantly readjusted to changing conditions.

The theory that colonies can serve the interests of imperialism only and exclusively as the source of raw-material corroborates Kautsky's definition of imperialism as the annexation of agricultural territories by advanced capitalist countries, a definition severely criticized by Lenin.[11] So long as mercantilist and industrial capital remains the dominating factor in the metropolis, economic backwardness of the colonies corresponds to the interests of imperialism. But the situation ceases to be so, as a rule, with the rise of finance capital. And as modern imperialism coincides with the rise of finance capital, it is not possible to assert that colonies must necessarily always remain in an industrially backward state as source of raw material production. The growth of the parasitic character of finance capital and the decay of production in the metropolis render industrial development of the colonies not only possible, but necessary for the existence of imperialism. If production of raw materials was the basic role of a colony, then India could no longer be of much value for the British empire. Indeed, judged from that standard, she could never have been of much value. For, Britain's share in the exports from India has never been very large. Over 60 per cent of India's exports always went to other countries. Now Britain's share is reduced to 21 per cent. Previously Indian exports to foreign countries represented export of British capital thereto. Britain's inability to export capital no longer permits her to be benefited by the raw product of India. Then industrial decay reduces the volume of raw material imported into Britain. So, if colonies were useful only or primarily as source of raw materials, Britain is no longer in a position to exploit colonies. Therefore, it is not possible to lay down a hard and fast rule determining the relation between the colonies and the imperialist metropolis in all periods and under all conditions. The relation has only one fundamental principle, and that is the exploitation of the colonies by the imperialist country. When it is profitable for imperialism to hold the colonies as source of raw meterial for the industrial metropolis, the policy is to obstruct the development of modern means of production there. When the conditions change, and owing to industrial decay in the metropolis, the raw product of the colonies cannot be disposed of profitable in the old method, their manufacture in the colonies into commodities becomes the more suitable means of exploiting the latter. As manufactured commodities contain more surplus value produced by the colonial toiling masses than in raw products, the super-profit for imperialism becomes greater, when the new method of exploitation is applied. So, under certain conditions, industrialization of the colonies in the very nature of imperialism.

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[d] Varga was for many years the official economic and statistical expert of the Communist International. M.N.R.

Only in the light of this new policy of imperialism can we make a correct estimation of the political situation in India. If there were no change in the policy of imperialism, if it were true as Comrade Bukharin asserted in his political report to the Sixth Congress, that, on the contrary, 'British imperialism has increased its colonial oppression of India in general and *of the Indian bourgeoisie in particular*' (italics are mine—MNR), then his observation made in the same report that 'it is inconceivable that the [Indian] bourgeoisie will play a revolutionary role for any length of time', cannot be wholly correct.[12] In that case it would also not be automatically clear that 'the politics of the Indian bourgeoisie are not revolutionary politics' as Comrade Kuusinen asserted in his report on the colonial question. The Indian bourgeoisie cannot be assumed to be fond of being oppressed or constitutionally averse to revolutionary politics. If they cannot be expected to take up a revolutionary fight against imperialism, that is because the new economic policy of imperialism permits the economic development of their class. On the background of a compromise as regards the essentials of the situation, certain section of the bourgeoisie is simply manoeuvring to secure the most favourable position possible. The counter-manoeuvres of imperialism, also to occupy the most favourable position, cannot be called new 'oppression, particularly of the Indian bourgeoisie'.

The great revolutionary mass movement of 1920–21 could not be suppressed by imperialism. It was betrayed and liquidated by the bourgeoisie as soon as imperialism indicated its willingness to make some economic concession. In the beginning of the year the boycott of the Simon Commission also was not suppressed by imperialism. It was sabotaged by the bourgeoisie who, as a matter of fact, never wanted it. Step by step, the bourgeoisie have abandoned the boycott, and at this moment the leaders of boycott parties are carrying on negotiation with the Simon Commission behind the scene. Why do the nationalist bourgeoisie act in this way? Because the new economic policy of imperialism makes considerable concession to Indian capitalism. As soon as a way out of the political impasse is found, the bourgeoisie will settle down to work on the basis of these concessions. By conclusively formulating their demand as 'dominion status within the British empire', cynically violating the resolution of the National Congress, they have set their face against further political commotion except of the harmless parliamentary brand. They have accepted junior partnership with imperialism, on principle; only the details of the bargain now remain to be settled.

The 'decolonizing' effect of the new policy touches only the bourgeoisie. The masses of India will remain in the state of colonial slavery even after the process of 'decolonization' culminates in the grant of dominion status. But parallel to the economic concessions made to Indian capitalism, there has been a transformation in the political position of the Indian bourgeoisie, and still further transformation is going to take place in the near future. It is still an open question how near to their covetd dominion status will the Indian bourgeoisie arrive in consequence of the constitutional tug-of-war at present in play. But there is no doubt that the result will be a further advance towards the goal. Politically and economically, the burden of colonial regime on the bourgeoisie has been reduced since the war and will be further reduced in the near future. This can be reasonably and historically reckoned as a process of 'decolonization' as far as it goes, as far as the bourgeoisie are concerned. And this relative liberation of the class interests of the bourgeoisie from the deadening grip of the old form of colonial exploitation, is the cause of their deviation from the revolutionary path towards a compromise with imperialism.

In his report, Comrade Kuusinen purposely did not touch the self-governing colonies like Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc., because, in his opinion, they are practically independent capitalist countries. If the self-governing colonies are not to be reckoned as colonies proper, then it is but logical to infer that in proportion as India approaches the status of a self-governing colony, she undergoes a process of 'decolonization', in a limited sense as far as the bourgeoisie are concerned. Now let us chronicle some facts illustrating the access of political rights, even some power, to the Indian bourgeoisie since the war.

Until the war, politically the Indian bourgeoisie together with the rest of the population, were in a state of practically complete suppression. The reforms of 1909 did not alter their position essentially. The net result of those reforms was that some higher grade of the public services was made accessible to the upper strata of the bourgeoisie. But the reforms of 1919 were different. They were much less than what had been promised by imperialism to assure the loyalty of the Indian bourgeoisie during the war. Nevertheless, they did confer upon the bourgeoisie considerable political rights and even the elements of power. These reforms were relatively of great importance, in view of the fact that until the war the bourgeoisie, as a class, had been as unfranchised, as the rest of the population.

The reforms of 1919 enfranchised not only the bourgeoisie, but even the upper stratum of the urban petty bourgeoisie. A very large majority of the Central as well as the Provincial legislatures was to be elected. Provincial Executives were made partially responsible to the legislature no less than 70 per cent of which would be elected. The administration of agriculture, industry, local self-government, education and sanitation was given over to Indian ministers under the control of the legislature.[13] In administrative units lower than the provincial government much greater place was conceded to the Indian bourgeoisie; for example, the administration of the premier city of the country, Calcutta, was completely in the hands of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The administration of the city of Bombay has also been largely under nationalist control. Even in the central government the native bourgeoisie can wield a considerable amount of pressure upon the executive if they have the courage. They are at least in a position to impede seriously the smooth operation of the executive machinery, if this would not be somewhat amenable to their influence. This was demonstrated during the years 1924 and 1925 when the nationalist members of the legislature acted as a solid opposition block.

All these superficial concessions did not alter the fact that the state-power ultimately remained with imperialism; but within this limit, the Indian bourgeoisie were given considerable elbow-room. In view of the fact that the programme of the nationalist bourgeoisie has never been complete conquest of power from imperialism (when India is raised to the status of a self-governing Dominion, imperialism will still remain the paramount power), this limited accession to rights and power was not negligible from their angle of vision. The reforms of 1919 were a step towards self-government, as far as the bourgeoisie were concerned. By the upper strata of their class the reforms were from the beginning recognized as such. The lower strata criticized and for a short time boycotted the reforms, not on their merit, but as not sufficient.

The majority of the members of the Commissions (Industrial Commission, Fiscal Commission, Currency Commission, Agricultural Commission) whose findings constituted the basis of the new economic policy of imperialism, were representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie. The chairman of the Fiscal Commission, on whose recommendation protectionism became the policy of the government, was an Indian industrial magnate. The highest state offices, only excluding the Viceroyalty, are today open to the Indians, and not a few of them are actually occupied.

In a number of occasions the Indian bourgeoisie have exercised their political rights to the discomfort of imperialism. So much so that the most short-sighted diehard elements among the British residents in India have demanded the revocation of the reforms. The following are some of the most noteworthy occasions. The Tariff Board set up by the Government to consider the claims of industries applying for protection, is composed of three members, two of them are Indians. After admitting the claims of a series of industries, largely or exclusively owned by Indians, the other day the Tariff Board rejected the claim of the Burma Oil Company. It also rejected the claim of the match industry which has been acquired by the Swedish Trust. The Government by exercising its reserve power could disregard the verdict of the Tariff Board, but it did not, showing its disposition to concede some power to the Indian bourgeoisie in return for their collaboration in mobilizing India's capital resources. The bourgeoisie feel themselves in a position to bargain with imperialism for more favourable conditions. Recently a private member's bill providing for the reservation of the coastal carrying-trade to Indian shipping, was carried through the Legislative Assembly in the teeth of Government opposition. The Government may sabotage the full application of the proposed measure; but it has no power to prevent its enactment. Finally, there is the Public Safety Bill which the Government wanted to pass by all means in order to close the doors of India to foreign communists. Such an eminently political measure, needed for the exercise of power, was thrown out by the nationalist majority, and the Government reconciled itself to the situation dropping the legislation so earnestly prepared.[14]

The Indian bourgeoisie are not going to have their demand for 'equal partnership within the empire' (Dominion Status) satisfied in the immediate future. But they are on the verge of making another considerable advance in that direction. In spite of the exclusion of the Indians from its composition, and the sham opposition of the Indian bourgeoisie, the Simon Commission is sure to find that the political rights and powers of the Indian bourgeoisie should be increased so that the smooth operation of the new economic policy of imperialism is assured. Since the appointment of the Simon Commission, both the sides have gradually modified their respective attitudes, and at present only formalities and 'political face-saving' stand in the way to agreement. Although the composition of the Simon Commission still remains formally purely British, representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie and landed aristocracy have been drawn in to collaborate, practically on the same footing, with the original Commission. Thus the section of the bourgeoisie boycotting the commission has been completely outmanoeuvred. For the sake of saving political face, this section must keep up a formal opposition; but they are sure to end up as their prototype in Egypt (the Zaghlulist Wafd) did in connection with the Milner Commission; they will finally accept the concessions made on the recommendations of the Simon Commission after having boycotted it. Very likely they will do so under formal protest.

The disappearance of the representative of diehard imperialism, Birkenhead, from the political arena indicates which way the wind blows in the imperialist camp. Other signs are also noticeable in the imperialist camp indicating that the political position of the Indian bourgeoisie will be improved in the near future. For example, the Associated Chamber of (British) Commerce of India in its memorandum to the Simon Commission recommends that provincial administration shuld be completely (including finance and police) given over to the Indians (bourgeoisie). It also suggests transfer of some power in the Central Government, subject to the supremacy of the Viceroy. The *Economist* of London, on 11 August, while making the very significant statement 'British rule is nearing the end of its utility' quoted above, observes that 'in the provincial sphere British management of Indian affairs may be visualized as on the eve of complete and compulsory liquidation'. At the same time the journal anticipates that in the central administration British control may continue still for a short period. The project of Indian constitutional reform as a self-governing dominion inside the British Empire, worked out by the bourgeois nationalist leaders, has been sympathetically commented upon in the imperialist press. A furtive negotiation around that document is even now going on between the Simon Commission and the bourgeois nationalist leaders.

So, the immediate perspective of the present situation in India is the grant of further political rights to the bourgeoisie. Only in the light of this perspective, it becomes 'inconceivable that the Indian bourgeoisie will play a revolutionary role for any length of time'. A gradual advançe of the Indian bourgeoisie from the state of absolute colonial oppression to self-government within the British Empire is taking place. Therefore, it is not necessary for them to travel the risky path of revolution. In other words, progressive 'decolonization' of their economic and political status makes the Indian bourgeoisie averse to revolution, and in the near future, when 'decolonization' of their class has gone further, it will make them positively counter-revolutionary. Transfer of some political power to the colonial bourgeoisie does not weaken imperialism; because the native bourgeoisie wield this power, not to further develop the struggle against imperialism, but to suppress the revolutionary movement. This has been demonstrated by the experience in other colonial countries.

'Decolonization' of the Indian bourgeoisie, thus, is not an 'illusion'. It is a fact which is the key to the situation. By estimating the situation in the light of this fact can we establish what Comrade Kuusinen very correctly said in his report: 'The mission of freeing India has been conferred by history on the Indian workers and peasants.' The worker and peasant masses cannot be mobilized to undertake their historic mission consciously only on the slogan—'the Sahib is a robber'. They must know that the native bourgeoisie are the accomplices of the foreign 'sahib', and therefore, will never carry on a revolutionary fight for national liberation. 'The sahib will never decolonize India' of the workers and peasants, but nor will the Indian bourgeoisie lead the people to national freedom. And this must be courageously told and clearly demonstrated to make the workers and peasants conscious of their historic mission. Comrade Kuusinen or any other comrade will search in vain to detect me ever spreading the illusion among the workers and peasants that 'the sahib will decolonize' them. On the contrary what Comrade Kuusinen today says about the historic mission of the Indian workers and peasants, I began propagating years ago when not a few leading comrades entertained illusions about the role of the nationalist bourgeoisie.

Notes

[1] Lenin wrote *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, in Zurich in the spring of 1916, 'in that cursed Aesopian language to which tsarism compelled all revolutionaries to have recourse whenever they took up their pens to write a "legal work" ' (Preface to the Russian edition). The text could only be partially revised by him in 1920 when the French and German editions were brought out. In his preface to the partially revised editions he explicated that 'parasitism and decay of capitalism are the characteristic features of its highest historical stage of development, i.e., imperialism . . . *a handful* of very rich and very powerful states . . . plunder the whole world simply by "clipping coupons" ' (V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1946, Vol. I, p. 648).

In his book Lenin quoted several times from two books by Professor Schulze-Gaevernitz: *Die deutsche Kreditbank; Grundriss der Sozialoekonomik* (The German Credit Bank, Outline of Social Economics, Tubingen, 1915); *Britischer Imperialismus und Englischer Freihandel zu Beginn des 20 Jahrhunderts* (British Imperialism and English Free Trade at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century, Leipzig, 1906). Lenin used many of the facts and arguments of the Professor, 'who is regarded as an authority by the imperialists of all countries', as grist to his own mill—to reinforce his own view of imperialism.

[2] 'In these backward countries profits are usually high, for capital is scarce, the price of land is relatively low, wages are low, raw materials are cheap . . . . The export of capital greatly affects and accelerates the development of capitalism in those countries to which it is exported.' Lenin, *Imperialism* in *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 688–90.

[3] Lenin, *Imperialism*, ib, Section X, 'The place of Imperialism in history,' pp. 736–40.

[4] As I have already mentioned in the introductory editorial note, a copy of Roy's statement to the ECCI 'on the Indian Question' was included as a prosecution exhibit in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. The original text of the statement was subsequently published by Roy in *Our Differences*, sometime after his release from jail. There are occasional discrepancies between the two versions. Paragraph divisions are sometimes different; several footnotes and the last paragraph in the exhibit copy are omitted in the printed text; not a few grammatical, syntactical and spelling errors in the former are corrected in the latter. The exhibit copy might have been a draft; it has passages which are obviously garbled. I have naturally reproduced the version given in *Our Differences*. However, the figures cited on page 68 of *Our Differences* seem quite clearly to suffer from some misplacement and misprints. I have collated the figures in this case with those given in the exhibit copy, and the figures as reproduced here are based on that collation.

[5] A footnote in the Meerut exhibit referred to some estimates by Shah and Khambata; Wadia and Joshi, and Eugene Varga.

[6] The figure for net surplus given in the Meerut exhibit was 74 million pounds. In *Our Differences* it was updated to 96 million in accordance with the revised account mentioned in this passage.

[7] The Steel Industry (Protection) Act, 1924, had granted protection to the industry for a period of three years, ending on 31 March 1927. On the recommendation of the Tariff Board, protection was extended for another seven years by the Steel Industry (Protection)

Act of 1927. Basic duties were fixed at a rate generally lower than between 1924 and 1927. Additional duties were imposed on continental (as distinct from British) steel. TISCO's capacity was planned to be increased from 420,000 tons to 600,000 tons of finished steel. Indian Tariff Board, *Statutory Enquiry 1926: Steel Industry*, Vol. I–VII, Calcutta, 1927.

[8] Indian mill production of cloth increased from 1,164 million yards in 1913–14 to 2,499 million yards in 1929–30; by 1939–40 it rose to 4,013 million yards.

D. R. Gadgil, *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times 1860–1939*, Fifth edition, 1971, p. 260. Also see S. D. Mehta, *The Indian Cotton Textile Industry*, Bombay, 1935; and *The Cotton Mills of India 1854–1954*, Bombay, 1954.

[9] The Tinplate Company of India Ltd was a joint subsidiary of the Burmah Oil Company, the biggest consumer of tinplates, and TISCO, the sole Indian supplier of steel bars. According to the Indian Tariff Board's *Statutory Enquiry of 1926: Steel*, 'the tinplate industry affords a notable illustration of the industrial progress attainable within a comparatively short period under the policy of discriminating protection adopted by the Government'. (Vol.I p.107.) The Company produced just over 9,000 tons in 1923, 29,555 tons in 1925, 41,521 tons in 1927. See Amiya Kumar Bagchi, *Private Investment in India 1900–1939*, Indian edition, 1975, pp. 342–5.

[10] In his article Varga conceded that in post-war India 'the *percentage* advance' of industrialization was 'rapid' and 'the *rate* of development' was 'very great'. But he qualified this concession by maintaining that 'the *degree* of industrialization attained was very small', that 'industrialization of India does not essentially differ in *velocity or character* from the industrialization of other overseas countries in the twentieth century', that the British did not pursue 'a consistent policy in support of industrialization' in India, that while he agreed with Roy in taking 1916 as the commencement of 'almost undisturbed collaboration between the British and the Indian bourgeoisie', 'of late years the Indian policy of the British bourgeoisie appears to have experienced if not a change, at least a slight deflection'. From this cautious formulation he proceeded to suggest that 'the British have returned to their old policy of opposing the industrialization of India'. In support of this view he mentioned some 'unpublished study' by Abani Mukherjee.

Varga's article was published in the German edition of *Imprekorr* on 15 Feb. 1928 and in the English edition on 14 March 1928. It was controverted by R. P. Dutt in *Labour Monthly*, June 1928 (Vol. X, No. 6) where he argued that there was no 'reversal of policy', but 'the apparent zigzags and variations within the general policy of industrialization' were due to the 'peculiar character of the problem of British capitalist industrialization in India,' which consisted in this 'that the proportion of Indian capital inevitably increases as industrial development goes forward, while the actual British supplies of fresh capital are for home reasons growing more restricted, but that at the same time it is the aim of British capitalists to maintain control of the new industrial era in India and reap the richest profits for itself by use of its dominant position, banking monopoly, shipping and trading monopoly, international connections and machinery of state power.' Dutt's views were very close to Roy's till after the Sixth Congress.

For Roy's recollection of Varga, M. N. Roy, *Men I Met*, Delhi, 1981, reprint, pp.84–9.

[11] For Lenin's criticism of Kautsky on this point, see Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol.I, pp.710–13.

Karl Kautsky (1854–1938) became the most authoritative spokesman of orthodox Marxism after Engel's death in 1895. He was the executor of Marx's papers and edited and published the fourth volume of *Capital*. He founded *Die. Neue Zeit* in Stuttgart in 1883, which was the principal organ of the German Socialist Party before World War I. At one time acknowledged by Lenin as his teacher, he later became a principal target of Lenin's attack.

In *Die Neue Zeit* (11 Sept 1914) Kautsky defined imperialism as 'a product of highly developed industrial capitalism' which strives 'to bring under its control or to annex increasingly big *agrarian* [Kautsky's italics] regions irrespective of what nations inhabit those regions.' Lenin's main points of criticism against this view were that, i) *finance* capital, not industrial capital was the characteristic feature of imperialism which, ii) 'strives to annex *not only* agricultural but even highly industrialized regions'.

[12] Bukharin, 'The International Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern', Report of the ECCI, *Inprecor*, VIII, 41 (30 July 1928). As already mentioned in the introductory editorial note, Bukharin's position at the Sixth Congress was most unenviable. Formally, he presided over the Congress and was the Comintern's principal spokesman; but everything was being done by Stalin even during the Congress to bring about his isolation and political destruction. He was helplessly aware of this, and there were internal inconsistencies in his reports and speeches which reflected his unwillingness to stand up to the major shifts in strategy and tactics taking place in the Congress. The 'Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the CI', which he had drafted and circulated, were attacked by the Russian Party delegation which 'insisted on no less than twenty amendments to the theses, thus advertising to the foreign delegates that Bukharin no longer enjoyed the full confidence of his own party.' E. H. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, Vol. 2, p. 74.

[13] The act of 1919 introduced a bicameral legislature at the centre; the Imperial Legislative Council was replaced by the Legislative Assembly of which 105 members were elected and 40 nominated (26 official, 14 non-official); the Council of State had a total of 60 members, 34 of whom were elected. Each province was provided with a Legislative Council of which at least 70 per cent of the members were to be elected, and not more than 20 per cent of the nominated members were to be officials. Dyarchy was introduced in the provinces; 'Reserved Subjects' were outside the purview of the Legislature, but for 'Transferred Subjects' there were Ministers appointed by the Governor from the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Council and responsible to the Council. The 'Transferred Subjects' included local self-government, education, public health, public works, agriculture, excise, cooperative societies and development of industries.

The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858–1947, ed. C. H. Philips, London, 1962; *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution 1921–1947*, ed. M. Gwyer and A. Appadorai, 2 vols, London, 1957.

[14] The Public Safety Bill was introduced three times in 1928 and 1929 and thrown out each time. For details see in a later section of this volume note 2 to the *Volksrecht* article: 'The Way to National Revolution'. SNR.

SELECTED WORKS

1929

8. Selections from *International Press Correspondence*
9. Selections from *Das Volksrecht*
10. *My Crime* (Meine Verbrechen)
11. Selections from *Das Volksrecht*
12. Selections from *Gegen den Strom*
13. Selection from *Revolutionary Age*
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The Ways of the Indian Revolution*

The process of class differentiation inside the nationalist ranks, which is a condition for the overthrow of imperialist domination by a revolutionary struggle, is slow, devious and painful. The proceedings and the results of the annual meeting of the National Congress, in the closing days of the last year, have once again proved this. The struggle for the capture of the leadership of the anti-imperialist movement by the petty bourgeois radical nationalists from the reformist big bourgeoisie broke out last year when the National Congress, for the first time in its history of forty-two years, declared Complete Independence (separation from the British Empire) as its goal. On the eve of this year's meeting of the Congress the struggle became so acute that a split appeared to be imminent.[1] The petty bourgeois left-wing was in open revolt against the plan of the right wing leaders to have the Congress endorse the desire of the big bourgeoisie to come to an agreement with imperialism.

The situation was so acute that the right-wing leaders would have been completely defeated, had they insisted upon carrying through their plan fully and without disguise. For example, on the eve of the meeting of the Congress, the right wing had the majority of only one vote in the Working Committee (governing body) of the Executive. The balance of forces in the full Executive was still more unfavourable, while the rank and file were overwhelmingly hostile to any compromise with imperialism. Offensive tactics, in such a situation, would be disastrous. The petty bourgeois nationalist masses would break away from the anti-revolutionary leadership of the reformist big bourgeoisie, and by the pressure of circumstances would be driven closer to the working class.

The result of the meeting of the National Congress is that the right wing leaders working in collaboration with the big bourgeoisie standing outside the Congress, have prevented such a clear revolutionary development of the situation. In the critical moment, they called upon the hero of the petty bourgeoisie, Gandhi, to save the situation. It was Gandhi who provided the formula of compromise between the two warring factions. According to the resolution proposed by him, and finally passed after two days of stormy debate, the National Congress agrees to accept Dominion Status inside the

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 18 Jan. 1929, pp. 64–5; signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

British Empire, if it will be granted within one year. Petty bourgeois illusion is incorrigible. Seven years ago Gandhi led a mighty revolutionary movement into a blind-alley with the cry 'Swaraj (self-government) within one year'. He reappears on the political arena with his antic and exploded programme, and the petty bourgeoisie again falls for it. In moving his resolution he said: 'If you will follow me and follow the programme I have suggested honestly and intelligently, I promise that Swaraj will come within one year.'

The programme he suggested as alternative to the programme of a revolutionary mass movement, which the National Congress must adopt should it insist upon the attainment of complete independence, is removal of untouchability, abandonment of alcohol drinking and popularization of the spinning wheel. It should be remembered that his notorious Bardoli Resolution, which liquidated the revolutionary mass movement of 1920–21, also recommended this programme to the nationalist movement. Gandhi has not learnt anything or forgotten anything since then. But the situation has changed. This was indicated by an unprecedented phenomenon in the Congress meeting. While the left wing resolution reaffirming that complete independence is the goal of the Congress, moved in opposition to Gandhi's resolution, was defeated by 1350 votes against 973, epithets of 'traitors' were hurled at the right wing leaders including the Mahatma. Such a scene could not be dreamt even a year ago.

With the help of their hero the right wing leaders outmanoeuvred the petty bourgeois rank and file; but the revolutionary tide that sweeps these forward cannot be stemmed. The rank and file of the Congress are bound to move still further to the left—towards the formation of a revolutionary democratic anti-imperialist united front of all those sections of the population whose condition will not be improved, indeed made worse, by a compromise with imperialism sought by the big bourgeoisie and their agents at the head of the National Congress.

The National Congress (that is, the main organ of anti-imperialist struggle) still remains formally tied to the interests and convenience of the big bourgeoisie. As far as resolutions go, it has been forced to repudiate its last year's resolution about the object of the movement, and to declare its readiness to waive its demand for complete independence in favour of self-government within the British Empire. Supposing the British Parliament will grant India the status of a self-governing dominion within a year, acting on the resolution of the National Congress, the Indian people will agree to remain inside the British Empire. Owing to political immaturity and the weakness of their social basis, the left radical leaders have been outmanoeuvred into this impossible position where they cannot remain for any length of time without admitting a complete defeat. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose, who until now were outstanding leaders of the left opposition, abstained from voting on the Gandhi resolution. In contrast to these, there is Srinivas Iyengar, a former president of the Congress and the principal leader of the radical wing. He kept up the resistance to the end, and characterized the Gandhi Resolution as 'ambiguous and unworkable which simply postpones the formal rejection of the Dominion Status for a year'. And this, after all, is the correct reading of the situation. Obviously as a tactical move, Iyengar, after a prolonged fight inside the governing body of the Executive, agreed to accept Gandhi's compromise formula on condition that the time limit was reduced to one year. This was generally recognized as a victory of the left wing. The resolution, as finally agreed upon, has the character of ultimatum to imperialism; but it requires an unusual amount of political naïvete to believe that imperialism will take the resolution as an ultimatum. Indeed, it has already answered through its authoritative organ, the London *Times*, which commenting upon the resolution observed that 'the British Parliament will not be unduly disturbed' by this dramatic gesture. But the resolution can be a potential weapon in the hand of the radical wing of the Congress. As there is no hope of British imperialism granting India full Dominion Status within the time limit set in the resolution of the Congress, the issue avoided today will reappear as the crux of the situation next year. And the final victory will belong to that faction which will have gained ground in the intervening time.

The plan of the right wing leaders seems to be to divert the attention of their rebellious followers from the burning political question to side issues of social reform. Previously, political radicalism of the petty bourgeoisie was allied with religious and social conservatism. The growing change in the economic situation—development of the modern means of production—is having its reflex upon the ideology of the nationalist movement. Today, critical attitude towards religion and hostility to pre-capitalist social customs and institutions are in fashion among the intelligentsia. They go hand in hand with political radicalism. Therefore, the attempt to distract the radical petty bourgeois nationalists with the antic cult of Gandhism will no longer be successful.

Nevertheless, the right wing leaders are going to encourage the new zeal for social and religious reform in order to divert the attention of the petty bourgeoisie from the burning political questions. Motilal Nehru devoted a considerable portion of his presidential address to the Congress in denouncing the disabilities placed upon the women and demanding the divorce of politics from religion. The Chairman of the Reception Committee, Sen Gupta, who is an agent of the right among the left, was much more vehement in dealing with the same problems. The logical conclusion of these speeches can coincide with imperialist objection to the freedom of India. The imperialists and their apologists point out the backward religious and social conditions of the Indian people to prove their unfitness for self-government. The big bourgeoisie desire to focus the revolutionary zeal of the petty bourgeoisie upon the fight for the removal of these obstacles. But this fight, of historical importance as it is, cannot be isolated from the political struggle. The two should develop as complementary to each other—making the national democratic revolution. So, the plan of the right wing leaders to head off the petty bourgeois revolt in the direction of non-political religious and social reform is bound to miscarry.

Consequently, the resolution of the National Congress does not essentially change the situation. It represents an attempt to check the revolutionization of the anti-imperialist struggle, which, however, is bound to be of no avail, thanks to the operation of forces beyond the control of the right wing leaders. The situation created by the resolution of the Congress is correctly depicted by a sensible imperialist organ in India:

> We anticipate that the effect of the speech (of Motilal Nehru at the Congress) will be to bring not peace, but a sword among the parties he has sought to unite, and that he will fail to convince the Extremists, who are pushing any moderate element out of the Congress, that the goal he sets before them is right and desirable, and that the method of approach he has prescribed is suited to the present conditions in India. [*The Times of India*, 30 Dec. 1928]

The struggle for the leadership of the nationalist movement, resulting from the process of the differentiation of class interests, cannot be liquidated by compromise resolutions. Intensification of imperialist exploitation calls for intensified forms and methods of struggle for national freedom. As the big bourgeoisie, owing to its desire to come to a peaceful agreement with imperialism, are opposed to a revolutionary struggle for national liberation, the nationalist movement must have the leadership of a more revolutionary class. Even the petty bourgeoisie, traditionally incapable of taking an independent political attitude, are rapidly outgrowing the leadership of the big bourgeoisie. For example, the left Nationalist organ Indian *National Herald* considers the speech of Nehru as 'disappointing' and remarks: 'It is hopeless to expect much from men like Motilal Nehru who want to hand over the Congress machinery to the Moderates'. After condemning Gandhi as an 'adept to compromise' the same paper declares that 'there should be no surrender in the fight for independence'.

The process of class differentiation will be quickened, the nationalist movement will be completely freed from the influence of the anti-revolutionary bourgeoisie, and will develop a clear revolutionary way in proportion as the influence and intervention of the proletariat and its party in the situation will be effective. The struggle for leadership will have to be fought ultimately between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The present petty bourgeois revolt is only a prelude, and as such is of historic significance.[2]

Notes

[1] This article, a follow-up of the earlier article in *Inprecor* (27.12.'28) 'The Indian National Congress', was presumably written immediately after Roy received details of the Calcutta Congress. The 'last year' in the text refers to 1927, and 'this year' to 1928, although the article itself was published in January 1929. For some details see note to the article 'The Indian National Congress'.

[2] In the first three months of 1929 *Inprecor* published six signed articles by M. N. Roy as follows:
Vol. 9, No. 4, 18.1.'29, pp. 64–5 The Ways of the Indian Revolution
Vol. 9, No. 5, 25.1.'29, pp. 71–2 Counter-revolution in Afghanistan
Vol. 9, No. 6, 1.2.'29, pp. 93–4 The Conference of Workers' and Peasants' Party of India
Vol. 9, No. 8, 15.2.'29, pp. 119–21 The Heroic Struggle of the Indian Proletariat
Vol. 9, No. 9, 22.2.'29, pp. 149–52 The Bourgeoisie and the National Revolution in India
Vol. 9, No. 12, 1.3.'29, pp. 203–4 Indian Communists in the Election Struggle
From considerations of space we have included only the first three articles. After 1 March avenues of publication in the Official communist press were closed to Roy. SNR.

Counter-Revolution in Afghanistan*

King Amanullah is overthrown. Incipient forces of progress in Afghanistan are overwhelmed by reaction. The events in the far-off Asiatic kingdom are not only of local importance. They are closely connected with the preparation of war against the Soviet Union. King Amanullah lost his throne, because he represented a new Afghanistan, still in embryonic state, which threatened more than the *purdah* (women's veil) and the *fez* (red head-gear of the Moslems). Taking a long view of the situation, it threatened British domination of the Middle East; and, immediately, was an obstacle to the preparation of war against the USSR. His overthrow renders an important base of military operation against the Workers' Republic, secure.[1]

Control of Afghanistan has always been the key to the British policy in that part of the world. Previously, Tsarist Russia disputed this control. The struggle between Tsarism and British imperialism for the control of Afghanistan led to many an armed conflict. Revolution in Russia eliminated one factor in the struggle; but for British imperialism the New Russia is much more of a menace than the old. Therefore, for British imperialism control of Afghanistan has become of much greater importance than ever.

Before, the task was to keep the enemy away from Afghanistan. Now the problem has become much more complicated. The enemy, now, is in Afghanistan. It grows out of the soil. Previously, it was comparatively easy to control Afghanistan on the pretext of safeguarding it against the Russian menace. When Russia became a friend of the weak and oppressed Afghanistan, the situation grew much more difficult for the British to handle. The disappearance of one of its traditional oppressors, namely, Tsarist Russia, improved the position of Afghanistan. Taking advantage of the favourable position Afghanistan tries to stand on its own feet—to assert its national independence, and reconstruct itself on the basis of this independence.

Amanullah objectively represented the forces hostile to imperialism. As such he was inclined to be more friendly to the USSR than to the British. But events proved time and again that he was neither particularly friendly towards the former, nor unduly hostile to the latter.[2] This being the case, it was possible to tolerate the evolution of the new Afghanistan into a buffer state with progressive tendencies, had British policy been simply to maintain the *status quo*. The class basis of the new Afghan State together with the general socio-economic conditions of the country would be a sufficient guarantee against its coming so much under the influence of the USSR as could transform it into a direct enemy of the British–Indian empire. So it is evident that the present British policy in Afghanistan is not to maintain the *status quo*. The policy in that region is an integral part of the general policy of British imperialism, the cardinal principle of which is war against the USSR.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. IX, No. 5, 25 January 1929, pp. 71–2; signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

Under normal conditions, British imperialism need not be unduly alarmed by the developments that were taking place in Afghanistan under the direction of Amanullah. But the new Afghanistan of Amanullah cannot be depended upon in case of war. Indeed, the British have made such formidable military preparations all along the north-western frontier of India—from the sea to the Himalayas—as place Afghanistan in a position in which it can be easily crushed. Britain's policy, evidently, is not to neutralize Afghanistan in the prospective war against the USSR, but to use it as an active factor of aggression.

The situation in India imposes this policy upon British imperialism. With a gigantic revolutionary movement in the rear, the British cannot undertake an open attack upon the USSR from that side. In order to win over the support of the Indian bourgeoisie, in addition to that of the other reactionary classes, it is necessary to create plausible reasons for such a war. A government in Afghanistan completely subservient to British dictation, willing to act as a provocative agent, would be very useful for the purpose. This cannot be expected of Amanullah. He would not take such provocative steps against the USSR as might embroil the latter in actions providing the plausible pretexts sought by British imperialism for the realization of its policy. In other words, Amanullah was an obstacle to the policy of using Afghanistan as a weapon of aggression against the USSR.

It is hardly necessary to prove that British imperialism was behind the counter-revolution. All the profuse protestations of the British to the contrary are ridiculous, and do not convince anybody having knowledge of the local conditions. Events leading up to the outbreak of the counter-revolution show how the affair was organized. It is generally believed that his visit to Europe fired Amanullah with the zeal for reform which presently cost him his throne. It is a mistaken belief created by imperialist propaganda. Amanullah evolved his programme of reform long before he visited Europe. Indeed, his visit to Europe was an evidence of his progressive tendency. His prolonged absence from home was utilized by his enemies for undermining his position and consolidating theirs. Indeed, one can reasonably suspect that his premature journey abroad was encouraged by his foes for this purpose. It cannot be believed that this astute plan for the fomentation and organization of counter-revolution was worked out by the tribal chiefs who revolted against him. A cleverer head behind the scene directed the whole affair.[3]

Then, take the military aspect of the affair. Amanullah's army was fairly modern, equipped with up-to-date weapons of warfare. This army could not be beaten unless the rebels were equally equipped. And they were equipped with modern artillery which they knew how to use. Until now, these tribes have always operated only with old-fashioned guns smuggled in small quantities with great difficulty from the Persian gulf ports. Suddenly they appear with artillery, machine-guns etc., and use them effectively. Under the given circumstances, the things could come to them only from India, and their artillerymen trained by British officers, unless these were actually directing the rebel field operation. The recent construction of the Khyber Railway must have provided the opportunity for transporting these weapons disguised as railway materials.

It is evident that without the help of the British the rebellion could be crushed by Amanullah's forces. Indeed, without British instigation reaction might not have raised its head at all in Afghanistan.

Amanullah is gone; but the nascent new Afghanistan he represented remains. The violent attempt to crush it will only quicken its development. The attempt to mobilize the forces of reaction in the country as a weapon in the aggression upon the USSR will surely draw the incipient progressive elements in the Afghan society closer to it, making them ever-stronger. So, the forces of democratic anti-imperialist forces, for representing which but halfheartedly Amanullah is overthrown, will not be crushed by the counter-revolution; on the contrary, it will quicken their crystallization into a decisive factor of the situation operating ever more relentlessly against foreign domination and its agent, native reaction.

Notes

[1] Shortly after returning from his European tour in the summer of 1928 Amir Amanullah was confronted with a civil war which forced his abdication. He had succeeded his father Amir Habibullah in March 1919, and almost immediately got involved in the Third Anglo-Afghan war (April–May 1919). The British alleged that the war was provoked by Amanullah with help and encouragement from the Soviet Union (*Papers Regarding Hostilities with Afghanistan*, HMSO, Cmd. 324, 1919; L.V.S. Blacker, *On Secret Patrol in High Asia*, London, 1922). Amanullah was defeated and forced to sign a treaty of peace in

August 1919. Bitterly anti-British, he tried to modernize Afghanistan by a series of reforms which made him unpopular with orthodox Muslims. He sought to establish good relations with the Soviet Union. At one stage in 1920 there was a tentative proposal to send M. N. Roy as Soviet Ambassador to Kabul. This, of course, had to be abandoned; instead Roy was sent to Tashkent with two trainloads of arms, military stores and money to raise and train an army of Indian liberation from out of the *muhajirs* (Muslim émigrés from India). Amanullah had issued a *firman* early in 1920 promising political asylum and support to the *muhajirs*, but the number of émigrés who came to Afghanistan (estimates vary from 36,000 to 1,00,000) proved too big for Kabul's resources. A few crossed into Soviet Russia; the majority returned to India by the end of 1920.

In March 1921 Amanullah entered into a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, but under British pressure he was forced not to allow Soviet consulates near the Indian frontier. British and Soviet interests continued to clash over Afghanistan throughout the 'twenties. The British found Amanullah too independent, and feared that he might be moving closer to the Soviet Union. Although both Sir Austen Chamberlain in the House of Commons, and Lord Irwin in the Indian Legislative Assembly maintained that the British policy in Afghanistan was one of scrupulous non-intervention, available facts indicate that the civil war which led to Amanullah's abdication was largely instigated, financed and armed by the British.

L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, 3 vols., Princeton University Press, 1951; J. Degras (ed), *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, London, 1951.

[2] Amanullah was constantly under British pressure. In October 1922 he had to expel from Kabul the 'Indian Provisional Government' headed by Maulana Obeidullah. In 1923, the Soviet Ambassador to Kabul, F. Raskolnikov (who was a close friend of M. N. Roy, and had developed a remarkable relation of trust and intimacy with Amanullah) had to be recalled to Moscow, under pressure from London. During his visit to Europe in 1928, Amanullah was lavishly entertained by the British government; he also went to Moscow where he was given a grand welcome by President Kalinin, War Commissar Voroshilov and the Foreign Affairs Commissar Chicherin. However, his request for a commercial treaty was not granted by Moscow.

L. Fischer, ibid., Vol. II; Chattar Singh Samra, *India and Anglo-Soviet Relations (1917–1947)*, Bombay, 1959.

[3] Colonel T. E. Lawrence, at that time stationed at Peshawar, was widely reputed to be the principal organizer of the conspiracy which led to the insurgency and civil war. Under the assumed name 'Shaw' he was employed in the Royal Air Force. The Afghan government issued a warrant for his arrest, followed by a proclamation that Lawrence would be shot at sight. Lawrence was then recalled to England. The insurgents were supplied with British arms and ammunition, and the Afghan government forces were several times bombed by the Royal Indian Air Force.

Liddel Hart, *Colonel Lawrence: The Man behind the Legend*, New York, 1934; L. Fischer, op. cit., II; Samra, op. cit.; Zafar Imam, *Colonialism in East-West Relations, A Study of Soviet Policy towards India and Anglo-Soviet Relations 1917–1947*, New Delhi, 1969.

Amanullah's downfall was seen by nationalist India as a setback to the Asian movement for political independence and modernization, and 25 January was declared 'Amanullah Day' throughout India. That the overthrow was planned by the British during Amanullah's visit to Europe was the view also of Roy's friend Raskolnikov. See his article 'The War in Afghanistan' in *Labour Monthly*, March, 1929. SNR.

The Conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of India*

The revolutionary elements in the Indian Nationalist movement are organizing themselves. They have not yet found a unified leadership. But consciously or unconsciously, they all look for it in the right direction—to the Proletariat. The speeches made and resolutions adopted at a number of subsidiary conferences that took place simultaneously with the annual meeting of the National Congress, show to what an extent the conditions are ripe for the proletariat to exercise hegemony in the struggle for national freedom.

Only a few years ago Socialism was practically unknown in India. Indeed, the attitude even of the radical petty bourgeoisie towards Socialism was one of suspicion and hostility. The nationalist petty bourgeoisie were decidedly reactionary in social outlook. Rude realities of the present and hope for a brighter future are liberating the petty bourgeoisie from the illusions about the dead past. Breaking away from feudal traditions, they find little solace in capitalism, which under the conditions of colonial exploitation does not offer their class any prospect of substantial economic betterment. They must gather courage to look further into the future. And there the beacon of Socialism attracts their vision showing them the only way out of political suppression, economic ruin and cultural stagnation. As a result of this, the most characteristic feature of the political situation in India today is the rapidly growing popularity of Socialism. All the petty bourgeois subsidiary organizations of the National Congress profess Socialism.

It is significant that the profession of Socialism by the petty bourgeois radicals coincides with their revolt against the policy of compromise with imperialism. This shows once again the inability of the petty bourgeoisie to play an independent political role. As soon as they attempt to break away from the leadership of the big bourgeoisie, they, in spite of themselves, tend to come under the influence of the proletariat. They do so in spite of themselves, for the petty bourgeoisie by themselves are not a socialist class. And, as they do so in spite of themselves, they are not likely to advance in the revolutionary direction unless the proletariat meet them half way, and make a fighting alliance with them for the realization of the programme of national revolution, for betraying which they are revolting against the leadership of the big bourgeoisie. Their profession of Socialism should be taken as indication of the opportunity to bring them under the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. In the revolutionary struggle for national democratic freedom under the hegemony of the proletariat, some of them are likely to be entirely declassed and become consciously Socialist. On the other hand, there is the danger of their relapsing under the control of the big bourgeoisie or developing into a Social Democratic party, if their objective (unconscious) advance towards the proletariat is not met promptly and tactfully.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. IX, No. 6, 1 Feb. 1929, pp. 93–4, signed article by M. N. Roy.   SNR.

The other danger of petty bourgeois radicalism crystallizing into a reformist Social Democratic party, has been revealed by the views expressed by some leaders of the movement on such vital questions as the function of the state, means of capturing political power, relation of classes, confiscation of land, etc.

A picture of the situation gives a very clear perspective of future development, and shows our tasks. It is a tug-of-war for the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle. Which way should it develop—towards constitutional agitation under the bourgeois leadership, or revolutionary fight under the hegemony of the proletariat? The petty bourgeoisie, which constitute the great bulk of the conscious and active nationalist ranks, stand in the middle, willing to move towards revolution, but lacking a determined, clearsighted, unified leadership. And as this can alone come from the proletariat, the task before us is clearly defined.

During the meeting of the National Congress the following subsidiary bodies held their separate conferences: 1. All-India Youth League; 2. Swadhin Bharat Sangha (organization of those who suffered persecution for revolutionary activity); 3. Socialist Youth League; and 4. All-India Volunteers Corps. The members of these bodies represent the most active element and majority of the Congress rank and file. Socially, they are all petty bourgeois intellectuals who are, as a rule, in very precarious economic condition. The Independence League, recently formed by the left wing leaders of the Congress, is at present the political leader of this revolutionary nationalist mass. The League also held its meetings during the sessions of the Congress. But being an integral part of the Congress, it did not assert separate existence. Consequently, radical and revolutionary forces, that constituted the majority in all the Congresses and Conferences (except the All-parties' Convention) were without a unified political leadership. The Congress, and incidentally its clearly revolutionary subsidiary organizations, were dominated by the bourgeoisie standing outside it. The following quotations from the speeches made and resolutions passed in the subsidiary conferences show that the outcome of the Congress does not represent the realities of the situation, which is decidedly revolutionary.

In a statement made in the All-parties Convention in opposition to the Dominion Constitution the spokesman of the Swadhin Bharat Sangha said:

> Dominion Status means that the entire politics of India will in the last resort be controlled by Britain in the interest of British imperialism. . . . We are also of the opinion that the salvation of India and her masses lies in the establishment of a Socialist regime. We are afraid that the constitution sketched in the Nehru Report is based on capitalist construction of society. We are not prepared to accept this constitution.

In contrast to the compromise in the National Congress on the controversy over Independence versus Dominion Status, the Youths' Conference resolved that 'Complete independence and not dominion status should be the immediate objective of India.'

The Conference called upon the youths to attain this goal by 'all possible means'. This is an improvement upon the Independence resolution passed by the Congress in 1927, in which such restrictions were placed upon the means for the attainment of independence as reduced the whole resolution to empty verbiage.

By the second resolution the Conference enjoined the youths to 'combat capitalism by all available means.' Capitalism was condemned as 'detrimental to the best interest of the nation'.

A third resolution indicated revolt against the cult of reactionary Pacifism. This meant repudiation of Gandhi—the idol of petty-bourgeois nationalism. This resolution calls upon 'Young India to take up the new challenge of imperialism and to create in the country an atmosphere in which responsive violence should not be deprecated'.

This resolution has a direct bearing on the situation. A few days before the meeting of the National Congress a British police officer was killed at Lahore. The assassination was generally interpreted as an act of the nationalists avenging the death of Lajpat Rai of injuries inflicted by the police during a demonstration. All the nationalist leaders, including those of the Congress, rushed to denounce vehemently the perpetrators of the deed, as they had done on previous occasions. This treacherous and cowardly behaviour of the bourgeois leaders was always resented by the rank and file. Now it is openly condemned. The nationalist rank and file declare their determination to answer imperialist violence by revolutionary violence.

The Socialist Youths' Conference met with the slogan 'We want

Revolution, and not Reformation'. We find the following statements in the speech opening the Conference:

> Nationalism is the slogan of the middle class, while Socialism is the cry of the toiling masses. The present social evils can be cured not by reform, but by revolution.
>
> Dominion Status was the cry of vested interest, and it remains to be seen how far the extremist section of the capitalist class will become revolutionary in politics.

Thousands of young men went about in military uniform as nationalist volunteers, signifying what such demonstration can only signify, that is, an enthusiastic will on their part for a real fight for freedom. When this is compared with the previous uniform of loincloth and Gandhi-cap of homespun stuff, the implication of the development of the movement becomes evident.

The climax of the situation was a huge mass-demonstration in which over twenty-thousand workers participated. Previously, thousands of workers, particularly peasants, used to be herded into the meetings of the Congress to be lectured by the bourgeois leaders. They had nothing to say or do, but only to provide an imposing background for the reformist policy of bourgeois nationalism. They are no longer satisfied with the passive role. This year the demonstration was a part of the general revolt against bourgeois leadership, and it was the most important—the dominating factor in the revolt. The demonstration indicates the readiness of the proletariat to appear on the political scene as an independent force, which is the essential condition for its ability to be the new leader in the new stage of the revolution.

Meeting in this atmosphere of revolutionary development from all sides, the Workers' and Peasants' Party, whose driving force are the Communists, was objectively the most important event of the moment. The Workers' and Peasants' Party is not the Communist Party, although the Communists play in it the leading and dominating role.[1] Several years ago it appeared on the scene as the first sign of radicalization of the nationalist masses. As such the Communists supported it, and aided its growth. Practically all the great strikes of the last two years were led under the banner of the Workers' and Peasants' Party. The object of the Communists was to make this new party the rallying ground for all the nationalist revolutionary elements, to develop it into a revolutionary nationalist mass party which is a crying need of the moment.

The quickening of the process of radicalization inside the nationalist rank during the last year placed the Workers' and Peasants' Party in a very favourable position. Until now the Party functioned in a loose, decentralized manner, as practically independent provincial organizations. It was decided to reorganize the party on a national scale in a conference which should meet simultaneously with the National Congress at the same place.

The conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party was very well attended. It magnificently reflected the revolutionary atmosphere prevailing in the country. But in doing so, it forgot, or rather neglected, its objective task—to mobilize all the forces of national revolution under its banner. Instead of coming out as the leader of the entire revolt, it placed itself in the position of one factor,—indeed, the most advanced and most courageous factor—of the revolt.

In the main political resolution of the Conference not only the Nehru Report is rightly condemned as 'a bourgeois democratic scheme of a not very advanced type', but an attitude of hostile criticism is also taken towards the Independence League representing the opposition to the bourgeois right wing of the Congress. Indeed, no distinction is made between the two factions inside the Congress. When the petty bourgeois left radicals are trying to oust the bourgeois leaders from the leadership of the nationalist movement, they are not supported; on the contrary, they also were condemned as the enemies of the workers and peasants, in the same breath with the representatives of big capital and landlordism. The criticism levelled against the programme of the Independence League was essentially correct; but the well-merited criticism should have been accompanied by a positive attitude—an offer of united front on the common platform of anti-imperialist struggle. The relation with the rest of the nationalist movement is defined as follows:

> While the Workers' and Peasants' Party remains relatively weak and unorganized in the country, it will be necessary to follow the traditional policy of forming factions within Congress organizations for the purpose of agitation, of exposing the reactionary leadership and of drawing revolutionary sections towards the W. and P. P. This policy, however, is only temporary. The W. and P. P. can have no intention of dominating or capturing the Congress. The function of its members within the Congress is purely critical. Our party members, therefore, cannot be allowed to take office in the Congress organizations.

A motion that the members of the party should join the Independence League with the purpose of capturing it was also rejected.

Note

[1] As early as 1922 Roy had proposed in *The Advance Guard* (1 October 1922) the formation of 'a mass party consciously representing the interests, immediate and ultimate, of the workers and peasants—a political party of the masses . . . with a programme advocating mass action for carrying forward the struggle for national liberation'. In November 1925

the Labour Swaraj Party was formed in Bengal; the name was changed to Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal in February 1926. In Bombay, similarly, the Congress Labour Party (formed in November 1926) was changed into the Workers' and Peasants' Party in February 1927. A 'Manifesto of the Workers' and Peasants' Party to the Indian National Congress, Madras', was published by the Party in Bengal in 1927. During 1928 WPPs were formed in Punjab, UP and Delhi. The first All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference was held from 23 to 25 December 1928; that was the occasion for this article by Roy.

Ironically, just when the WPP was getting off the ground, the Comintern changed its tactics, and the Communists in India were instructed to disband the WPP, and sever relations with the Congress and the Independence League. (*Inprecor IX*; 33, 1929). In two issues of *Inprecor* (29 March and 5 April 1929) Roy was specifically attacked by Paul Schubin for the former's article on the WPP. SNR.

Selections from *Das Volksrecht*

May–July
1929

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On 13 December 1929 *Inprecor* announced that 'Roy, by contributing to the Brandler press and by supporting Brandler Organization, has placed himself outside the ranks of the Communist International' (p.1470). However, the announcement also mentioned that the decision was based on the authority of a resolution of the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI (3 to 19 July 1929).

Since the principal organ of the Brandler group was *Gegen den Strom*, and since after he had joined the Communist Opposition Roy became a frequent contributor to this journal, it is generally assumed that Roy's formal expulsion was occasioned by his writings in this journal. However, a careful combing of the index of contents (*inhaltsverzeichnis*) of *Gegen den Strom* shows that Roy's earliest contribution ('Meine Verbrechen') to the journal did not appear till 14 September 1929. Consequently that could not have caused the condemnation at the Tenth Plenum in July.

Going through the proceedings of the Tenth Plenum, however, I found that the Indonesian Communist Musso attacked Roy specifically for writing in *Volksrcht*, 'Organ der rechten Opposition in Deutschland' and called him 'a comrade of Gandhi, Brandler and Thalheimer' (*Protokoll 10 Plenum des EKKI*, Verlag Carl Hoym Nachf, Hamburg-Berlin, p.241; *Inprecor*, 21 August, 1929). But while a set of Roy's articles in *Gegen den Strom* in the original German is known to be preserved in the library of the University of California at Berkeley, no writer on Roy so far has to my knowledge read or seen or discussed his writings in *Das Volksrecht*. Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller (*Communism in India*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960, p.142) frankly admit that they 'have been unable to locate any Brandlerite journal of the title given (*Volksrecht*)'. Roy's writings in this journal were not mentioned by Roy's earliest biographer Tayab Shaikh (A. K. Hindi: *M. N. Roy: the Man Who Looked Ahead*, Ahmedabad, 1938), nor by J. P. Haithcox (*Communism and Nationalism in India: M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy 1920–39*, Princeton, 1971), nor by V. B. Karnik (*M. N. Roy: Political Biography*, Bombay, 1978), nor by Muzaffar Ahmad (*Myself and the Communist Party of India 1920–1929*, Calcutta,1970) nor by A. Reznikov (*The Comintern and the East*, Moscow, 1984), nor by Robert J. Alexander (*The Right Opposition*, Greenwood Press, 1981) whose book devotes one chapter to 'the Brandler Thalheimer group in Germany' (chap.8, pp. 135–55) and another chapter to 'M. N. Roy and the Communist Opposition' (chap. 13, pp.231–52). It puzzled me that no Roy scholar, admirer or critic, has succeeded in tracing the pieces of writing which actually occasioned his expulsion, although all of them invariably refer to the Tenth Plenum and *Gegen den Strom*.

Fortunately Mr. Gerd Callesen of Arbejderbevaegelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv, Kobenhavn, Denmark, came again to my rescue. He provided me not only with a full photocopy set of Roy's contributions to *Gegen den Strom*, which I had selected from the *inhaltsverzeichnis* of that periodical, but also with photocopies of relevant material from *Das Volksrecht* which he could trace in his archives. I knew that in the early part of 1929 Roy lived in Berlin under the assumed name 'Richard' (*M. N. Roy: Philosopher Revolutionary*, ed. Sibnarayan Ray, Calcutta, 1984, pp. 88–9, but I did not know that he had contributed under that pseudonym to *Das Volksrecht* before his expulsion from the Comintern. Mr Callesen furnished me with photocopies of 11 articles in *Das Volksrecht*—three published in May and June under the pen-name Richard, five signed Manabendra Nath Roy (July, September, October, November 1929) and three in May and July 1930. Besides, he also gave me a photocopy of a very extensive review of Roy's Russian book on China, *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*. The review was published in five consecutive issues of *Das Volksrecht* (Nos 42–6) from 18 October to 15 November 1929. The book was published from Moscow–Leningrad by the State Publishing House, presumably quite early in 1929, before Bukharin's downfall. Sections from this book have been included, in translation, in the *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Vol. II, OUP, 1988.

The bibliographic details of *Das Volksrecht* are as follows: published irregularly from Offenbach/Main Since 1925 (six to eight issues a year); then it became a weekly in November 1928 and was published as 'Organ der Kommunistischen Partei [Opposition] Hessen-Frankfurt'. In April 1932 a part of the KPD(O) including the Offenbach group joined the Sozialistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands (SAPD) and *Das Volksrecht* became the organ of SAPD. It continued to be published as a weekly till February 1933. The coming to power of the Nazis drove the KPO underground and its leaders into exile.

SNR.

An Alarm-Call for Self-examination: Comrade Richard on the Crisis of International Communism*

Das Volksrecht Editor's note

The following article comes from the pen of a well-known Indian Communist and Marxist theoretician. From the article it is clear that the liquidation of Leninist politics by the present leadership of the Communist International is not limited to the German Communist Party, but it also involves Communist leaders outside Germany. Comrade R., who has also played an important role in the revolutionary workers' movement in England, was for years a leading member of the Communist International and a representative of the Indian communists at the ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International). His numerous writings on the Indian and English working class movements have secured for him a wide reading circle in the revolutionary working class of Germany. His warning, in view of the crisis in the international communist movement, is a daring act which has been warmly greeted by the Opposition (of the German Communist Party), though Comrade R. is highly critical of the tactics of the German Communist Opposition. We are aware that the followers of the ultra-left path will denounce him as a 'renegade' and a 'liquidator'. Kuusinen and Neumann, who till recently wanted to use him as a support to their catastrophic politics and were harshly rebuffed, would now pounce on him the way they have been doing on other leaders of the Opposition since long. But we are confident that communists of all countries would, sooner or later, respond to his alarm-call because ultra-left politics, the praxis of bankrupts, is increasingly showing that what R. has stated in this article clearly articulates the duty of each true revolutionary towards his party and the working class.

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* Translated from *Das Volksrecht*, No. 20, 17 May 1929. Original heading of the article: 'Ein Alarmruf zur Selbstbesinnung: Genosse Richard zur Krise des internationalen Kommunismus'. 'Richard' was one of several cover names used by Roy at this time. He never visited England, but his articles were published in British Communist periodicals, and during the twenties he was widely known to the English political public both for his writings and his revolutionary activities. In November-December 1926 Roy was elected a member of the British Commission of the ECCI. The reference in *Das Volksrecht's* introductory editorial note to his 'important role in the revolutionary workers' movement

Be Realists: by Richard

> Proletarian revolutionaries criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished task in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltriness of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out!
>
> Hic Rhodus, hic salta!
> Here is the rose, here dance![1]

Without paying heed to the definite risk of being stamped as a 'liquidator', every revolutionary who has not lost his sense of reality must admit to himself, and must also have the courage to declare that the international communist movement is passing through a crisis. The crisis could be one of development. It is, however, clear how the proletarian revolution must triumph, how socialism must be made a reality, how human society can save itself from the decline and ruin of capitalism only through a proletarian revolution under the leadership of the communist avant-garde. Crises, like the present ones, lie grounded in the essence of a proletarian revolution that is yet to mature its dialectics. The revolution will grow stronger and become really invincible to the extent (as we understand it) it learns from the crises and overcomes them relentlessly! The above-quoted sentences from Marx, written at a time when the proletarian revolution had just begun (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*), show a way which could be of great help in solving the present crisis of the international communist movement. We must remind ourselves of these sentences, we must understand their meaning and apply them to concrete issues. However, should any one express the same ideas today he will be denounced as a 'liquidator' who has no faith in the working class. This only demonstrates the outstanding difficulties of the present crisis.

The will to victory is an inherent characteristic of any revolutionary movement. But there are also other factors which are no less essential. If they are not present, if they do not influence the situation with all their powers, victory eludes us despite the strongest will to win. If these factors are absent, the revolutionaries have to be careful that they are not driven by the admirable qualities of the will to win to such an extent that they lose sight of the actual conditions of the given situation. Revolution is no romance, it is tied to reality. That applies, above all, to the proletarian revolution. We must pay equal attention to our defeats and our victories. So it is not a tendency to liquidate when one acknowledges defeat and exposes 'with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltriness' of those who are responsible for it. That is, on the contrary, of great significance for the development of the proletarian revolution. That is a truly Bolshevik quality. That we should have learnt from Marx by now.

The Berlin Example

The total experience of the international communist movement in the course of the last two years shows how completely have the teachings of Marx been forgotten. The May incident of Berlin forms the climax of this sorry fact.[2] Instead of learning valuable lessons from these latest experiences in order to strengthen the revolutionary movement, we dupe ourselves so that we declare our task to have been completed, when in reality it is far from it. This idealization of our power, this unjustified belief that we are sure to march from victory to victory, is not a characteristic of a proletarian revolutionary. It is rather a feature of the bourgeois revolutionary. The international communist movement must relieve itself of the danger of being misled into the path of a bourgeois revolution.

The Berlin incident of May has taught us that the slowly but steadily growing influence of the Communist Party among the masses must first be consolidated. An overestimation of this influence brings forth the danger of its isolation from the masses. This will be clear if we recapitulate a few of the well-known facts. The workers of the Berlin Transport Co. did not go on strike on the 1st of May, although just a few days earlier the Communist and Opposition candidates did win a majority in the Works Council. Shortly after the election to the Works Council, two prominent Communist leaders were dismissed. There was no protest—not even a resolution. While it was amply clear that there would be a grim fight on the 1st of May, not for once did the revolutionary Works Council discuss the question of a strike or of the planned demonstration in violation of the prohibition. The indoor meetings of 1st May were very well-attended, but the street demonstrations elicited very little response. The street fighting which occurred on the evening of 1st May was not a spontaneous intensification of the movement. This is a very important fact. It reveals the fundamental weakness in our position—the gap between the vanguard and the masses. The latter followed the Party on the streets only partially, hesitantly and cautiously. A still lesser number would follow the Party to the barricades—here the Party would stand alone.

Street-fighting constitutes a higher form of revolutionary class-struggle only when it culminates in a mass demonstration. In other cases, like in Berlin in the three May days, such an action of the vanguard does not, by itself, lead to a general intensification and expansion of the movement. It serves to demoralize the hesitant masses even more. Only in the middle of an acute revolutionary situation, whose characteristic feature is the visible breakdown of the bourgeois state-apparatus, can such an action by the vanguard be necessary to set the ball rolling by goading the masses through the disclosure of the weaknesses of the opponent. Where this precondition is absent, such action of the 'avant-garde' will amount to a 'putsch', the most probable result of which will be an isolation of the Party from the people. Without underplaying the heroism of the participants in any way, the May-action in Berlin cannot but be regarded as a 'putsch' with dubious advantages for the Party. This was a practical application of the 'offensive theory' which was so strongly criticized by Lenin and rejected by the Third World Congress of the Communist International.[3] If the offensive theory was wrong in 1921, it is hardly more correct in 1929, when both capitalism and the bourgeois state are in no worse position than in 1921 and when the fighting spirit of the people is not in any way stronger than it was then.

On the eve of 1st May it was evident that the people would not follow the Party. Taking this fact into consideration, the tactics should have been changed immediately. The continuation of the 'Action', notwithstanding the *retrograde* phase of the revolution, was a 'putsch'. The call for demonstration, in spite of the prohibitory order, was right. But the Party itself should have called a halt as soon as it realized that the people were not yet ready.

That the policy of the Party was based on a misunderstanding of the situation was decisively proved by the incidents that followed. The call for a general strike went unheeded. Even the transport system could not be brought to a standstill despite the great communist influence on this industry. Even a protest-strike for a few hours could not materialize. The leadership kept up the struggle for two days—long enough for the mass uprising to occur if the people were ready for it. Throughout the entire course the people denied the Party of its following. This is the central point on which the situation should be judged. This should also be the determinant for the future policy of the Party.

Overlooking this fact would lead the Party to disastrous consequences and alienate it from the masses. If the painful experience of the defeat in Berlin in May is not to be forgotten, if the blood of the workers is not to be shed in vain,—then the Party must again recall the teaching of Marx—'come back to the apparently accomplished task in order to begin it afresh'.

Our influence on the masses is evident as before. However, the people cannot as yet be brought into the fold of a decisive revolutionary action under communist leadership. The victory in the election to the Works Council is misleading. For years the people have been increasingly voting for the communists in parliamentary elections. Now they are beginning to realize the nature of communist leadership in operation. And finally they will also follow the communists to the barricades. But the people require many years before they can advance from the first to the second stage of revolutionary offensive. They must go a long way before they can reach the front line. We must be careful not to congratulate ourselves on a victory which has not yet been achieved. Such a baseless and cheap self-congratulatory arrogance can only be disastrous for us.

Think of Marx's words: the characteristic feature of a proletarian revolution is to interrupt itself continuously in its own course, to strike a balance between its achievements, to face defeat when it comes with courage, and to come back to the apparently accomplished task in order to begin afresh, to achieve what one already believes to have been achieved. If the Party acts according to this wise principle, then it will be able to profit from the experience of May. In such a case the Party has to recognize the vainness of its heroic gestures and dedicate itself to the more difficult task of regaining the confidence of the masses, which has been lost largely as a consequence of the last adventure.

Unbelievably though, this is not the case. One has learnt nothing from the trying experience. A demonstration like the earlier one is being planned on an international scale, even after we have experienced such a severe defeat at the centre.[4] No-one is in a position to definitely determine when and where the revolutionary outbreak is to begin. Those who doubt the efficacy of the policy of proclaiming an international demonstration on the Berlin-model, would be very happy if they prove themselves to be false prophets. But under the given condition, this demonstration-tactic (on the model of the 1st May encounter in Berlin) looks like a wild speculation, which clearly proves that no lessons have been learnt from the last experience.

The incapacity to learn from experience characterizes the present crisis of the international communist movement. But it is a crisis of leadership rather than a crisis of the movement. The absence of a healthy and constructive criticism which would be feared by the leaders of the movement, goes hand in hand with a lamentable mental stagnation that holds its ground under the mask of 'seclusionism' and the garb of mechanical discipline. The result is that mistakes, instead of getting corrected, produce new mistakes. Reality is totally disregarded for the sake of justifying this intellectual and political bankruptcy. Theories are made, not on the basis of vital facts, but with a view to justifying mistakes which arise either from ignorance or from well-intentioned experimentation.

The Chinese Example

The latest mistakes of the German Communist Party are occurrences which do not have only local significance. They form part of an entire chain of happenings connected with the international communist movement. Let us take the example of China. Our tactics there took no notice of the realities of the situation. This bankruptcy resulted from a tendency to shirk responsibility for a mistake which contributed to the disastrous setback in mid 1927. The Communists sacrificed the revolution for the sake of keeping the block united with the Kuomintang. Then they raised their claim to independent leadership of the revolution when it was already too late and indeed when the bourgeoisie had taken the offensive quite some time ago and routed the workers. The failure of the Canton uprising made it clear that the proletariat was adopting revolutionary measures in a retrograde phase of the revolution.[5] In the following phase our policy should have been directed at regaining lost ground. Instead, with action-packed resounding revolutionary slogans like immediate agricultural revolution, 'armed uprising' and 'Soviets'—which came in 2 months late—the Communist Party led the working class to a bloody massacre and isolated itself from the political life of the country.

Instead of combining legal and illegal actions when and wherever possible, the Party followed a policy of seclusion. Its major activity was thus tactically reduced to guerilla warfare with small bands of armed peasants. That is romantic, and it can be described in glowing terms in revolutionary writing, but that is no proper leadership of the revolution. In dozens of theses and resolutions the Communist Party was proclaimed as the sole leader of the revolution—and it is undoubtedly so. But a leader must lead. In order to do that, the Party should have found a way to reintegrate itself with the political life of the country. There were numerous chances for such reintegration, if only the ultra-left course, adopted as a compensation for the earlier opportunism, had been discarded. Instead of organizing the 'Soviets' in the rocky desert of Hunan, the Party could have built a solid foundation in the heart of the country with the slogan 'Election of a Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage'. A correct view of the situation would have shown how a popular and powerful revolutionary movement could be organized in China on the basis of such a programme. In such a situation, which would be produced by this agitation, the proletariat can again become the real leaders of the revolution and lead the country on the only correct path—that of establishing a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. But this cannot be achieved in the prevailing condition of crisis in international leadership.

The Indian Example

The policy in India likewise does not take into account the given reality. This is definitely due to the reaction to the defeat in China and to the ominous shadow of Trotskyism. We have burnt our fingers in China, so in India we'll try it without any fire at all. Till yesterday every Indian was, as if by birthright, a revolutionary nationalist. Our criticism that it was necessary to differentiate between the different classes that participated in the national movement, was dismissed as 'revision of Leninism'. Today the whole country except the proletariat and the peasantry has come to be considered as counter-revolutionary. The communists must now lead the working class against the entire united front of counter-revolutionaries who, according to this theory, include every-one from the British Viceroys to the petty bourgeois nationalists who threw bombs at the Legislative Assembly as a mark of protest against oppression. The same theoreticians who till yesterday praised the 'Swarajist' bourgeoisie as revolutionaries are now placing them in the same boat with the imperialists as enemies of the Indian people.[6] This is very hard to believe, but it is nevertheless true, unfortunately very true!

A forthcoming change in the tactics of revolutionary struggle is imperative. The role of a class, which by itself is not revolutionary, must change in course of the advance of the movement. But such a change has not yet taken place in India. Our policy, however, has changed radically. Mistakes made in China have not been rectified. On top of that a new policy has been adopted in India which relies on the Chinese experience and as such is totally blind to the reality of the Indian situation. This has led to new mistakes.

One could multiply the examples to show that the same picture is present everywhere. Hence the lessons of the Berlin incident is of international significance. The international communist movement will be able to enrich itself from these valuable lessons only when men will again recall that a revolutionary must first be a realist.

Notes

[1] The passage quoted here is from Marx's brilliant pamphlet *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) which gave a penetrating analysis of the causes and implications of the *coup d'etat* in France of December 1851. The enthusiasm and simplification of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) were chastened by the experience of the collapse of the revolutionary wave in Europe. The limits imposed by circumstances were given fuller recognition in this account; the complexities of class struggle in a specific socio-historic context and the shifting positions of different classes were carefully analysed; and lessons were drawn regarding problems and obstacles to be overcome by the forces of revolution. Like the rest of the essay, the quotation from *The Eighteenth Brumaire* has also been translated here anew from the German text.

[2] On 16 April 1929 the Executive Committee of the Comintern announced in its May Day theses that 'this year the proletarian vanguard will have to break through the barbed-wire barriers which the bourgeoisie have erected to prevent the May Day celebrations . . . the task of organizing May Day celebrations is this year one with the task of organizing the struggle for the streets'. Fearing disturbances, all demonstrations on May Day were prohibited in Berlin by the president of the city police, Zoergiebel, who was himself a socialist. The KPD defied the ban; there were street fights and police firing; for two days barricades were put up in the Neukoelln ward of Berlin; a number of people (24 according to Wilhelm Pieck, 40 according to another contemporary account) were killed. 'Next day when coffins of these victims of capitalist terror were in a procession through the workers' locality to the graveyard the workers were not stirred up and only a few thousand joined the procession.' (A. K. Hindi, *M. N. Roy, the Man Who Looked Ahead*, 1938, pp. 175–6.) When the KPD issued a call for a general strike, only 'one single factory of sweetmeats' responded to that call. (Franz Borknau, *World Communism*, 1962, p. 340).

[3] The Third Congress of the Comintern (22 June–12 July 1921) met in the shadow of the fiasco of the 'March Action' in Germany and the bloody suppression of the Kronstadt Mutiny in Russia. The announcement of the New Economic Policy in March 1921 indicated the end of one phase and the beginning of another in Soviet domestic and foreign policy. The Third Congress recognized that 'the open revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for power is at the present moment slackening and slowing down in many countries' and 'the chief task of the Communist Party in the present crisis is to direct the defensive struggles of the proletariat, to broaden and deepen them' (Theses on the World Situation, nos. 39 and 40). The Congress Theses on Tactics acknowledged that 'the majority of the workers are not yet under communist influence', and stressed that 'strengthening the party's contact with the masses means above all closer links with the trade unions' (nos. 3 and 4). Lenin explained that between the Second and the Third Congresses the Comintern had 'passed from the tactics of assault to the tactics of siege', that revolution did not progress 'in the straight line which we expected', that 'what is essential now is a fundamental preparation of the revolution'. The tactics of united front was adopted, and the slogan proclaimed was 'To the Masses'.

Protokoll des III Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale, Hamburg, 1921; *Thesen und Resolutionen des III Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1921.

[4] The West European Bureau of the Comintern held a conference on 16 May 1929, 'to organize an International Day against Imperialist War', in accordance with a directive of the Sixth Comintern Congress. The Statement on the Conference which appeared in *Inprecor* of 31 May 1929 mentioned Brussels as the place of the conference although in reality it was clandestinely held in Berlin. The Statement called for a campaign against 'the bloody terror of German social fascism in the May days', advocated 'the most ruthless overcoming and extermination of all right and conciliatory tendencies within the Communist parties', urged communists to expose 'the most rapid development of social democracy towards social fascism', and fixed 1 August as the International Fighting Day against Imperialist War. The

Day was duly observed, but as a demonstration of communist support it was a failure. This was admitted in the *Communist International* of October 1929. Jane Degras, *The Communist International: Documents*, Vol. 3, London, 1971, pp. 26–31; 64–7.

[5] Despite the disastrous defeats suffered by the Communists in China during 1927—in Shanghai, Wuhan, Swatow, Hailufeng, Changsha—the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was urged by the Comintern Executive to stage urban uprisings. A young henchman of Stalin, Heinz Neumann, was specially sent to China for this purpose. The uprising at Canton started at dawn on 11 December 1927 and for two days the city was under communist control. Then the 'Ironsides' of General Chang Fa-k'uei moved in; the Canton Commune was quickly overthrown; according to an eyewitness account, 'slaughter continued for four or five days during which some 6,000 people, allegedly Communists, lost their lives in the city of Canton' (J.C. Huston manuscript in the Hoover Institute Collection at Stanford, quoted by Robert C. North, *Chinese Communism*, 1966, p. 104). The news of the Canton disaster reached Moscow while the Fifteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party was still in session. The Stalinist majority passed a resolution declaring that despite temporary defeats the Chinese revolution was gathering its forces for a new beginning, *Report of the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.*, London, 1928.

For contemporary accounts of the Canton uprising, A. Neuberg (assumed name of Heinz Neumann), *L'Insurrection Armée*, Bureau d'editions, Paris, 1931; *Röte China: Dokumente der Chinesischen Revolution*, Moscow–Leningrad, 1934, pp. 139–65; and papers in J.C. Huston Collection at Hoover Institution, Stanford.

[6] The 'Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries' adopted by the Sixth Comintern Congress urged that 'the communists must unmask the national-reformism of the Indian National Congress and, in opposition to all the talk of the Swarajists, Gandhists, etc., about passive resistance, advance the irreconcilable slogan of armed struggle for the emancipation of the country and the expulsion of the imperialists' (Thesis 34). *Protokoll des 6. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, July–September 1928, Hamburg, 1928, Vol. 4. During 1929 various articles published in *Novy Vostok, Inprekorr*, etc. referred to the Indian Independence League as 'an attempt by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie to create an instrument which would keep under bourgeois influence the classes in Indian society which are becoming revolutionary', and described the 'liberals in India' as 'the agents of British imperialism'. An ECCI Manifesto of March 1929 proclaimed that 'English imperialism has not only forced the national-bourgeois opposition to its knees, but has also managed to get it to serve as cover for its own terrorism.' *Inprekorr*, 3 April 1929, p. 649.

SNR.

The Way to National Revolution in India: The New Tactics of the Communist International*

RICHARD

> The Assembly is an institution which stands like a threatening monument to the power of the exploiters and the slavery of the deprived workers. We threw the bombs to register our protest in the name of all those who had no other means left to give expression to their heart-rending agony. Our action was intended to mark the end of the era of utopian inefficacy. The rising generation has no illusions about the ineffectiveness of utopianism. We wanted to emphasize the lesson of history that acts of persecution and the Bastilles could not crush the revolutionary movement in France. Gallows and Siberian mines could not extinguish the Russian revolution. Can Ordinance and Safety Bills snuff out the flame of freedom in India? Imprisonment of all the young people who have dedicated themselves to a great ideal cannot also check the forward march of the revolution.[1]

These sentences are taken from the declaration in the court of two members of a revolutionary nationalist organization who were arrested in connection with the bomb attempt in the Central Legislative Assembly which was discussing the Indian Bills.[2] Besides the bombs, which ultimately did not prove to be very destructive, they also threw leaflets in the conference room. Their party explained that the attempt was a protest against the anti-communist bill which was then being discussed, as also against the imprisonment of revolutionary leaders of the workers' movement. A few of the 'Indian experts' (none of whom were ever in India) have characterized this attempt as an act of provocation in their articles. The experts could have tried to acquire a minimum understanding of the social composition of the revolutionary movement in colonial countries before making such a 'discovery'. The above quoted self-explanation of the suspected 'provocators' and the harsh punishment that will definitely be meted out to them, show how lamentably ignorant these 'experts' are.

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This pitiable ignorance, however, is not a personal characteristic of these particular experts. If that was so, one could have overlooked it. The situation is much more serious because this outrageously wrong interpretation will force the events in a way as to justify the new tactics of the Communist International in India. The Sixth Congress of the Communist International, proceeding from a wrong interpretation of the world-situation, has adopted this fatal policy. In this India has been viewed along with a large part of the world where the Communists have been forbidden by the Comintern leadership from taking the initiative in the organization of a revolutionary nationalist Peoples' Party to further the cause of the anti-imperialist struggle. In order to justify this blatant anti-Leninist policy, certain quotations were discovered in which Lenin himself had spoken against organization of two-class parties. Such a political organization naturally can never be a substitute for a party of the proletariat. That is a fundamental principle of the Communist movement. The issue before the Sixth Congress, however, was the role of a revolutionary nationalist People's Party in the present Indian situation, and the communist position in relation to such a party. The resolution of the Sixth Congress, which forbade the communists from having any relation with such a party, ruled out the fact that the petty bourgeoisie (in contrast to the half-proletarian peasantry) could play a revolutionary role in a colonial country like India.

It was, therefore, very disagreeable for the Communist International to have to recognize (and indeed, even before the ink with which the 'revolution' thesis had been written was dry) that the petty bourgeoisie could perform such an act, whose revolutionary significance it was impossible to repudiate. In an attempt to save face, the 'experts' have smelt 'provocation' in this action. A grave mistake has been committed. Lest the facts expose it thoroughly, lest they invalidate the correctness of this tactics, this clearly wrong interpretation has been advanced. This is an evidence of total political bankruptcy which characterizes the entire present leadership of the Communist International.

Let the facts speak for themselves. In consequence of the parliamentary Opposition of the nationalist bourgeoisie, the government was forced last year to abandon the anti-communist bill. Before the bill was introduced in a new form this year, the viceroy toured the whole country to win the support of the national bourgeoisie to whom be promised reforms. A portion, whose interests are closely tied to the imperialist finance, was won over. The rest, however, persisted in their refusal. The government threatened to pass the bill bypassing the Parliament. The Opposition nevertheless was successful in submitting it to the nationalist President of the Central Assembly for his decision. The Viceroy asked the President to reconsider his decision which was against the proposed bill. And precisely at that moment, when the President was about to announce his reconsidered decision, the bombs were thrown in the Assembly hall as a declaration of the presence of the 'Hindusthan Socialist Republican Army'.[3] The announcement of the President was halted by this incident. It was hoped from the side of the imperialists and the native bourgeoisie tied to them that the opinion of the President would change as a result of this attempt. He was warned not to hinder a measure which was necessary to check the threat of revolution—a threat which was made evident by the throwing of bombs in the Assembly. The President had, however, not changed his decision although the Viceroy had practically ordered him to do so.[4] The anti-Communist bill was put into operation bypassing the Parliament. The Parliament was suspended so that the bill could be implemented through an ordinance certified by the Viceroy.

This opposition was a political manoeuvre of the national bourgeoisie. They have definitely no love for communism. As soon as they come to power, they will happily let the Communists hang, as British imperialism is doing at present. But the intention and future plans of the bourgeoisie do not rule out the immediate effect of a definite bargaining on their part at present. The bourgeoisie of a colonial country are a revolutionary factor only as long as they are compelled to carry out acts of opposition to imperialist absolutism. The Communist policy of supporting the nationalist bourgeoisie in colonial countries as long as their interests place them in opposition to imperialism has thus the objective of leading the bourgeoisie in a direction where they will commit more such concrete revolutionary acts. They may act as though they are doing so without the pressure of the masses. The experience in China has proved the correctness of these tactics. The Communist International decided that the Communist Party of China would provide leadership in the reorganization of the Kuomintang into a revolutionary nationalist People's Party. The leaders of the Kuomintang, including Sun Yat-sen, made it clear to the Communist Party that they were not in agreement with the programme of Communism. The policy which was nonetheless adopted under Lenin's leadership contributed to the rapid growth of the revolution in China which was maintained as long as it was not degraded to the level of naked opportunism. The Communists must take the initiative in forging a fighting alliance between the working class and the bourgeoisie in a particular phase of the struggle against imperialism. The condition for such an alliance is not the sympathy of the bourgeoisie for communism which can never come about. The alliance must be forged exclusively with the objective of creating a situation which will be favourable for the struggle of the proletariat to gain hegemony in the revolution.

The policy of the United Front as regards the national bourgeoisie must be given up as soon as the bourgeoisie become actively inimical to the working class, that is, as soon as the bourgeoisie ally with foreign imperialism in order to overpower the revolution which is already going against the bourgeoisie. Our catastrophic defeat in China was due not to the policy of supporting the Kuomintang as the Trotskyites believe, but to its opportunistic continuation to a time when it should have been replaced much earlier by another. The conditions in India cannot be equated with those in China. Nevertheless, there is an inherent similarity. The social character of the revolution in both the countries is identical. The order of the day four years ago in China was the development of the bourgeois democratic revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat. And so it is at present in India. The Communist policy must be determined by this need of the hour.

Various social classes together form the instrument of the bourgeois democratic revolution. An alliance of these classes is, therefore, indispensable for the growth of the revolution. The basis for this alliance will become narrower in the measure in which its socialist elements fail to keep pace with the progress of the revolution. The revolutionary potential of this or that class must be determined, in the first place, in accordance with its relation to imperialism. Can the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie be readily dismissed as counter-revolutionaries when, with the limited and ineffective means at their disposal, they still oppose absolutism? Was it tactically right from the Communist standpoint to denounce the Swarajists (Independence-Party) as collaborators of imperialism and enemies of the working class at the very moment when they (the Swarajists) were opposing the anti-communist bill without paying heed to the danger it entailed for them? Wasn't the attempt (bomb-throwing) of the petty-bourgeois revolutionaries as a protest against the anti-communist bill and against the arrest of proletarian leaders a proof that they were ready to carry on the anti-imperialist struggle under the hegemony of the proletariat? How can all the available weapons for the struggle against imperialism be united under the hegemony of the proletariat, if the communists do not take the initiative in its organization? It is evident that the new policy is wrong, However, on the basis of this policy we had to abuse an ally, who followed our leadership, as provocator—in order to implement single-handed a policy based on a false reading of the situation.

The discussion in the Sixth World Congress has itself shown that a clear understanding of the present situation in India was lacking. For example, Bukharin stated in his speech on the international situation that British imperialism had given up its policy of concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie and 'had intensified the colonial oppression of India in general and of the bourgeoisie in particular'. All the 'experts' on India have vehemently denounced as 'stooges of imperialism' all those who were of the opinion that the concessions which the bourgeoisie received from the British, would eventually reduce their revolutionary potential. Nonetheless, the tactical line which has been laid down in the resolution of the Congress states definitely that not only the big bourgeoisie but also the oppressed petty bourgeoisie are to be disposed of as counter-revolutionaries.[5]

The disintegration of the petty bourgeois links with wings of the National Congress is advanced as proof of the correctness of the new policy by the 'experts'. This disintegration definitely means a weakening of the anti-imperialist struggle. The radical petty bourgeoisie has turned towards the reformist big bourgeoisie because the communists, in pursuance of their policy, failed to bring them under proletarian hegemony. This debacle, however, has affected only the leaders of left-radicalism—the mass of the petty bourgeoisie is still as revolutionary as before. They speak through those whose declaration in court we have quoted above. The feeling of sympathy and solidarity for the arrested communists is very well spread among the petty bourgeoisie. Under their pressure, the National Congress, which is governed by the sharply anti-communist big bourgeoisie, also had to decide in favour of defending the arrested leaders of the working-class movement.[6] The obstinacy to ignore these realities would only defer the moment when the communists would take over the actual leadership of the national revolution.

Notes

[1] On 8 April 1929 Bhagat Singh (1907–1931) and Batukeshwar Datta (1908–1965), two young members of the Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association, threw two bombs on the floor of the Indian Legislative Assembly in Delhi while the ruling of the Assembly President on the Public Safety Bill was being awaited. No one was killed; instead of trying to escape Singh and Datta readily allowed themselves to be arrested after having scattered copies of a 'Red Pamphlet' which declared their faith in the inevitability of 'a revolution that will bring freedom to all, rendering exploitation of man by man impossible'. At their trial they issued a joint statement from which Roy has drawn this quotation. Since the statement was formally made in the court on 6 June, Roy must have received an advance copy to quote from it in his article of 24 May. The passage has been retranslated here from the German version given in Roy's article.

Indian Annual Register, 1929, Vol. I, pp. 78–80; The *Times*, London, 9 April 1929; R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, 1963, pp. 513–17.

[2] The two bills before the Legislative Assembly were the Trade Disputes Bill and the Public Safety (Removal from India) Bill. The former was intended to curtail the right of

workers to strike, and it was passed. The second, introduced by the Home Member in September 1928, was strongly opposed; in its original form, it was ruled *ultra vires* by the President of the Assembly. When it was moved again in a version amended by the Official Select Committee, the voting in the Assembly was 61 for and 61 against. The President, following the parliamentary tradition, gave his casting vote for the status quo and the bill was rejected. The bill was re-introduced in April 1929, but on the ground that it would prejudice the trial in the Meerut Conspiracy Case (31 persons had been arrested under warrants issued by the District Magistrate at Meerut on 20 March 1929), the President ruled it out of order. The ruling was given after the act of bomb-throwing. Thereafter the Viceroy, using the authority conferred on him under Section 72 of the Government of India Act, issued the 'Public Safety Ordinance 1929'.

The Times, 13 April 1929; *India in 1928–28: Indian Annual Register*, 1929.

[3] Underground nationalist revolutionary groups in the United Provinces met at Kanpur in 1924 and formed an organization under the name of Hindusthan Republican Association. Its leaders were Sachindra Nath Sanyal (1895–1945) and Jogesh Chandra Chatterji (1895–1969). Roy knew Sanyal personally having collaborated with him as an underground revolutionary before he went abroad; he resumed contact with Sanyal in the early 'twenties, hoping to win him over to the Communist cause. Both Sanyal and Chatterji were sentenced to life-imprisonment in 1925 and not released till 1937. However, the HRA was reorganized by younger members like Chandra Shekhar Azad (1906–1931) and was renamed Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association (also called the HSR Army). In 1929 nearly all the leaders of HSRA were arrested, and the Lahore Conspiracy Case instituted against them. Three were sentenced to capital punishment, seven transported for life, and others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Chandra Shekhar Azad, who succeeded in evading arrest, died fighting in a park where he was surrounded by an armed police party (February 1931).

Note on 'Terrorism in India' submitted by the Secretary of State to the Joint Committee on Constitutional Reform 1933–4, *Joint Committee Report*, Vol. II, App. A; Jogesh Chandra Chatterji, *In Search of Freedom*, New Delhi, 1967; Sachindra Nath Sanyal, *Bandi-Jivan* (in Bengali), 2 Vols.

[4] The President of the Legislative Assembly was Vithalbhai Patel (1873–1933), elder brother of the more widely known Sardar Vallabhbhai. Founder-Chairman of the Nationalist Party, he entered the Indian Legislative Assembly in January 1924 on the Swarajya Party ticket, and in August 1925 was elected President of the Assembly under the provisions of the Govt. Of India Act of 1919. He was re-elected to the Assembly in 1926 and elected unanimously as President. A consistent moderate in his politics, he was nevertheless respected by the revolutionaries for his integrity and courage. G. I. Patel, *Vithalbhai Patel: Life and Times*, 2 vols., Bombay, 1950.

[5] *Protokoll des 6 Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale,* Hamburg, 1928, Vol. 4.

[6] On the initiative of Jawaharlal Nehru, a Meerut Prisoners' Defence Committee was set up formally by the Congress Working Committee under the Chairmanship of Motilal Nehru. A grant of Rs 1500 was made towards the defence, and an appeal was issued. However, the Congress leaders soon lost interest in the Meerut prisoners. The hostile attitude of the Comintern to the Congress and the preoccupation of the Congress leaders with the impending Civil Disobedience movement combined to cause this decline of interest. Pramita Ghose, *Meerut Conspiracy Case*, Calcutta, 1978. SNR.

England, America and the New Threat of War*

The Spectre of a New World War

It is now fifteen years since the time when the world sank in an orgy of death and destruction of a kind which is without example in history. That became well-known as a war 'which was to put an end to all wars'. In spite of this the capitalist powers today are seeking to be stronger by arming themselves to the teeth. We are now experiencing a feverish militarization, and that too with weapons whose destructive powers are far greater than those used during the blood-bath of 1914–18. The navies and armies of the leading imperialist powers are now much stronger than in 1914. To this must be added that, as a result of each war 'which is to put an end to all wars', new capitalist states come into being which serve solely as military bases for the big powers. Militarists rule in these countries which pose a standing threat to the peace of Europe. All in all, today much more money is spent on the maintenance of significantly stronger armies, for the construction of stronger war fleets, for winning military allies, and for several other war-preparations, than fifteen years ago. The spectre of war is haunting the world—much more menacingly than before.

War is embedded in the essence of the capitalist system. Economic competition finds expression in political rivalries which, in turn, lead inevitably to armed clashes. The destruction of the capitalist system is the sole guarantee against this danger of war. The worldwide conflagration which broke out on 4 August 1914 could rightly be described as a war to 'end all wars' in that it seriously threatened the capitalist order. Out of this conflagration emerged the first proletarian state—an irreparable crack in the wall of the capitalist world. The collapse of the bourgeois social order has begun. The bourgeoisie is fighting a desperate battle for its life. In this epoch of capitalist retreat the danger of war is naturally more acute than in 'normal' times. This does not mean that the bourgeoisie is blindly running towards its own destruction, which a new world war will almost certainly mean to them. It would be a vulgar view of world politics, if one regarded all the plans for peace—plans which have governed the diplomatic relations between capitalist governments in the last year—simply as background for the war preparations. It will be an amateurish simplification of the study of the highly complicated world situation to assume that the bourgeoisie and its allies are speaking exclusively of peace in order to deceive the working class. The danger of war is becoming more and more threatening with growing contradictions within capitalism in its epoch of decline. In spite of this it must be admitted that the bourgeoisie is desperately endeavouring to find a way out of this situation without, in the least, mitigating the threat of war. Neither the bourgeoisie, nor its social-democrat allies are pacifists by conviction. But they are also no idiots. They can clearly see that a new armed conflict between capitalist states can be the most solid foundation for a war which 'will put an end to all wars'. It can ring the death-knell for the bourgeois social order. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that they are making feverish attempts to find a peaceful solution to the problems which can lead to a conflict. The struggle against the threat of war cannot be led successfully on the basis of every agitation which proceeds from the assumption that the mass of workers believe everything that the Communists say, that all the plans for peace are being drawn up only with the object of veiling the war-preparations. The struggle against the danger of war will be successful only when it is made clear to the mass of workers that the capitalist plans for peace cannot materialize. Their materialization is frustrated by the intensified contradictions of the capitalist system, which these plans of peace are supposed to stabilize. Only when the people understand this, will they be able to comprehend that the social democrat leaders and their trade-union bureaucrats are offering voluntary service to the bourgeoisie. Only then will they realize that the only way to free human society of the devastation of recurrent wars is the destruction of the capitalist system.

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The 'Pacifist' turn of British Imperialism

The formation of government by the Labour Party in England with a view to remain in office for at least two, if not the normal parliamentary period of four years, is directly related to the question of the war-threat. The Communists should have no illusion about Macdonald's pompous plan of 'peace and benevolence among the people'. They will find themselves to be wrong if they assume that the bourgeoisie brought Macdonald to power, so that he would make proper preparations for war. On the contrary, the humiliating defeat of the Conservative Party marks a total rejection of Chamberlain's war politics.

This politics was rejected not only by the working class. An important section of the bourgeoisie also held the same view. This was made evident by the fact that Chamberlain himself narrowly avoided defeat in his own constituency. Taking this fact into consideration, even the Conservative Party has, after the elections, declared its readiness to support Macdonald's plan for the 'regulation of international issues through negotiation'. We are stressing again that the Communists cannot afford to have any illusions regarding this plan. They will be guilty of a wrong assessment of the world-situation if they do not pay attention to the fact that the British bourgeoisie is itself frightened by the danger of war.

The Question of an English–American War

The present world-situation is being governed, above all, by two factors—the continuance of the workers' state (the Soviet Union) amidst the surging sea of capitalist reaction, and the struggle between England and America for world domination. The first factor is the special characteristic of the post-war world. Nevertheless, Anglo-American rivalry now occupies the central place in the international scene. It is exactly this rivalry which is letting the threat of war grow. Till now a united offensive by the capitalist world against the Soviet Union has been successfully prevented by this rivalry. The efforts of the British bourgeoisie to form a European war-bloc against the USSR have been successfully checked by American imperialism. America's animosity towards the power of the working class over one-sixth of the world is certainly no less that that of other capitalist countries. Washington would not greet the fall of the Soviet Union with less sincerity than London. In spite of this, America has to oppose the formation of an anti-Soviet European block under the leadership of England, because such a coalition would go far beyond this aim. It will be a factor against American hegemony in Europe. Therefore, it is a rivalry among the imperialist powers which has, so long, prevented united capitalist opposition to the Soviet Union. The settlement of this dispute among the capitalist powers is a precondition for a successful offensive against the Soviet Union. From this standpoint all the efforts in this direction can be viewed as objective preparations for war with the Soviet Union. In this sense even the Labour Government in England is operating as an instrument for the preparation of a capitalist offensive against the Soviet Union. If the bourgeoisie could bring Macdonald to agree to an Anglo-American understanding, it would clear the road to the much desired offensive against the Soviet Union. But can that happen? That is the burning question of the present moment. Is it possible to remove the causes of

Anglo-American antagonism with the magic wand of the obsolete liberalism inherited by Macdonald, or by the pacifist illusions of social-democracy? The facts show that it is not possible and therein lies the danger of another world war.

The world-conflagration that broke out fifteen years ago was primarily the result of Anglo-German rivalry. The rise of Germany as a first-class imperialist power, which aggressively announced its claim to a 'place under the sun', threatened the English domination of the world. The British lion readied itself to spring to crush the upstart. The armed conflict was preceded by a decade of diplomatic duels, political intrigues and direct war-preparations.

The power-relations today, however, are completely different. England, as before, is a party to the conflict. But it now finds itself in a decidedly worse situation. During the war with Germany it was the greatest world power. At that time only the upstart could dare to challenge its world domination. Today England has lost this proud position. It is fighting a losing battle. In a war against America, the world will not follow her in the way it did during the crusade against Germany. The British bourgeoisie has recognized that in rejecting Chamberlain's diplomacy. The Anglo-American rivalry, which forms the deciding factor in the present international situation, and which is developing in a totally changed world-condition, cannot as yet lead directly to a gigantic collision. Naturally, the conflict cannot be avoided totally. But the development to this catastrophic point is in no way on the cards. The bourgeoisie is afraid of the punishment it will get in such a war.

Under the present conditions, England would suffer defeat in a direct conflict with America. The defeat in a gigantic conflict—the result of a trial of strength with the new giant on the other side of the Atlantic—would spell disaster for England. England has no guarantee that her autonomous 'dominions' (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) would help her in this war. On the contrary, it is more probable that they will desert their so-called mother country.

Today England must look towards Canada, its important 'dominion' with great anxiety. By virtue of its geographical location and economic relations Canada can hardly be expected to become an active supporter of England in a war against America. In case of a war, Canada would have no guarantee against its armed occupation by its southern neighbour. England would not use its power to protect Canada from an offensive from the South. Besides the economic ties between the United States and Canada are growing closer and stronger day by day than those between the 'dominion' and its mother country. More than 200 million pound sterling worth of American capital invested in Canada, while the accumulated capital of Canada finds a profitable field of investment in the United States. Canada annually imports from the United States commodities worth 165 million pounds sterling while its exports to America amount to approximately 100 million pounds. In view of this fact England can hardly afford to have any illusions regarding Canada's position in case of an Anglo-American war. The certainty of losing Canada has already become an important reason for England not to risk a war with America for as long as possible. Even Australia's stand in case of such a war is doubtful. The pro-British circle in South Africa has, in course of time, been more and more pushed aside by the growth of nationalism. The loyalty of this nationalist force, in case of such a trial of strength, can hardly be counted in England's favour. Besides, England has to reckon with such big oppressed countries as India and Egypt, where revolutionary mass movements are constantly gaining in strength as a consequence of the brutal politics of oppression. England would definitely seek to prevent a great armed conflict with America, to deal first with the revolutionary situation in the colonies. Finally, the radicalization of the English working class is also a very important factor, which British imperialism must take into account. Hence, at present England cannot risk a war with America. It must win time to hope that in the meantime its position will improve somehow. That is the reason why the British bourgeoisie backed Labour Party to power, to establish peace with America.

America's Way to World-domination

The development of this situation does not depend on England alone. America can come to an understanding with England on its own conditions. England will have to capitulate, i.e., surrender its supremacy to its rival. American capitalism has crossed the phase of 'peaceful' development. Before the war America was always a country encumbered with debts, which imported capital mostly from England. Today it is not only a creditor country, but controls world finance. It is the banker of the world. England itself is heavily indebted to America. This powerful financial position which America reached as a result of the war-loans, has been strengthened in the last few years by a new factor: the rapid growth in its industrial exports. The well spread-out internal market which has been the basis of a fabulous industrial growth in America for a quarter of a century is not sufficing any more. New foreign markets have to be captured. American imperialism is now looking towards new colonial conquests.

This position of America can be illustrated with a few facts. Till 1926 England was the leading export nation. Since then this prized position has been taken over by the United States. The change in the composition of American exports makes the English decline more significant. In the pre-war period nearly half of American exports consisted of raw materials and foodstuffs. In contrast to this, finished products formed the largest part of British exports. In the last years finished and half-finished products have made up three-quarters of the total American exports. Since 1914 the export of finished and half-finished goods by America has risen by nearly 200 per cent. This enormous growth in American export trade is the expression of the forceful advance of America against British monopoly of the world market.

However, American imperialism is going still further: it is making an assault on the inner reserves of British capitalism. It is displacing British goods from colonial markets. With the help of the rapid increase in American export trade, American capital is forcing its way into the economic life of every country. It is not only that the economic life of Germany and other European countries is being governed by American finance. Even England, the classical home of imperialist capital, is no longer safe against the invasion of the dollar! The danger of control of industrial concerns in England by American capital has already become so great that legal restrictions are being seriously considered.

England, therefore, must pay a very high price if it wishes to come to an understanding with America. In actuality, the present Anglo-American rivalry is more irreconcilable than the Anglo-German rivalry which led to war in 1914. But the power-relations today are too uneven to lead directly to an armed conflict. The wish to avoid the armed conflict does not lie only in the party which finds itself in an unfavourable situation. America also shares this wish. The United States prefers peaceful penetration to war. The American bourgeoisie is arming itself with all the most modern and dangerous war-instruments. But it is aware, at the same time, that the growth of industries and consequent financial predominance will flourish much better under peaceful conditions. It has already invested so much capital in Europe and so urgently needs more foreign markets, that it has an interest in preventing, by hook or by crook, European governments from fighting each other. It is not so stupid as not to see that a new war in Europe will probably be one 'to put an end to all wars.' It will open the sluice gates of revolution, which has so long been held in check by the intervention of American capital.

Dawes Pact, Kellog Pact, Young Plan—are the successive stages in the American politics for capturing the hegemony in Europe, so that an armed conflict on a larger scale is averted for as long as possible.[1] The United States has replaced England as the leading power in the world. American imperialism is scattering the bait of its dollars throughout the globe. Till now it has not felt it necessary to cross swords with any great power to preserve the booty. America today is fully in a position to start a war with its rivals, who are politically and economically weaker, and to beat them. But it is a totally different thing to subjugate militarily a rebellious Europe! American bourgeoisie is not ready to take such a difficult and dangerous task in hand. What it wants is to prevent the creation of a pan-European combination under British leadership. And so for years now we have had the devil's dance of diplomatic fencing on the surface of a simmering volcano!

Briand's 'Pan-Europe'

The British bourgeoisie, hemmed in from all sides, has decided upon a strategic retreat with a view to set its house in order as a preparation for the fatal conflict. The first official act of Macdonald was to extend the olive branch to American imperialism. However, soon trouble broke out in another area. American obstinacy on the issue of an immediate ratification of the regulation of war-guilt has increased the animosity of France. While Poincare, instead of being obstinate, is yielding to the pressure of the American creditor, his colleague Briand is reviving the ghost of Pan-Europe with the clear intention of shocking the creditor.[2] Briand's statement that he wishes to submit, in the coming meeting of the League of Nations, a plan for the economic union of Europe as a first step for a political union, is not only a warning to American imperialism to tread carefully in the danger zone. It also pulls back the horse of 'solution through negotiations' (with the USA) which Macdonald happily intends to ride.

The 'United States of Europe' is a dream of social-democracy. Today we find that this social democratic catchword has been snatched by the European bourgeoisie, while social democracy has moved away from its favourite plan. Stresemann has, on behalf of the German bourgeoisie, immediately come out in support of Briand's plan.[3] But the Labour Government of Britain does not want to hear anything about it! The organ of the British Labour Party, *The Daily Herald*, in its issue of 13 July has strongly rejected Briand's proposal in the following way:

> Briand has rendered very poor service to the cause of world-peace by producing again from his antiquated and half-forgotten dovecote, the plan for an economic and political federation of Europe . . . Against whom is this proposed federation directed? Against America? Against England? . . . The British workers' movement will support no plan whose aim is to divide the world into separate, exclusive and mutually competing units.

The organ of the British Labour Party rejected in this way a plan for bringing about the economic unity of Europe only a few days after the Labour Government had made it clear that it would continue the policy of the growth of the British empire as a closed economic unit—a policy which was elaborated by its predecessor, the Conservative Government. The division of the world into 'separate, exclusive and mutually competing units' lies grounded in the very nature of capitalism. The Labour Government wants to create such a unit out of the British empire in the interest of British capitalism. Briand wants to do the same with Europe in the interest of the European bourgeoisie. In its own interest, American imperialism will try to defeat both the plans. These are the tendencies under the surface of the world situation, which are growing under the shadow of the danger of war.

England–Soviet Union

The British Labour Government is trying, with the support of the bourgeoisie, not only to settle the problem of Anglo-American rivalry. It also wants to help the bourgeoisie to rectify its openly hostile politics towards the Soviet Union. The restoration of normal relations with Soviet Russia is a pressing need of the British export trade. After the failure of Chamberlain's aggressive policy towards the Soviet Union, the British bourgeoisie can ill-afford to sulk eternally, and let the Russian market be captured in the meanwhile by a rival. In a meeting of the leading industrialists in London on 3rd July, the steel-magnate George Armstrong made the following declaration: 'The politics of sulking with regard to Soviet Union will bring no good for the improvement of trade between the two countries, which we all strongly wish'. He made a proposal to push aside all feelings of mistrust towards the Russian Government and to consider relations with it on a 'healthy commercial basis'. Another representative of the British Steel Corporation wished that the Labour Government should somehow finance the trade with Russia as this would 'help us out of many difficulties'. The decision of the British Labour Government to re-establish relations with Soviet Russia is being carried out not only to support the British bourgeoisie but also as a result of its demand. The contradictions of capitalism in the phase of its decline are so complicated that capitalism is actually forced even to qualify its standpoint regarding its arch-enemy. On two vital issues of current world-politics, British imperialism must admit defeat. Pressed to the wall by America, it had to defer its policy of preparing for an immediate war with the USSR. The constant threat which the capitalist social order poses to the peaceful development of the Soviet Union expresses itself, from time to time, in hostile actions like, for example, the seizure of the possessions of the East-China Railway.[4] The continual intensification of rivalry among the capitalist powers makes a united offensive by them highly improbable, at least in the present situation.

All these facts of the present situation show that while the preconditions of war are growing, the danger of war does not, as yet, stand very close to us. Instead of trying to find conscious preparations for war in every action of the bourgeoisie and its allies in a workers' movement, it is much more necessary to make the working class understand that the danger of war is so great, that even the bourgeoisie itself is recoiling from it.

We must place some confidence in the intelligence of the masses. It is dangerous to rally them with few cheap slogans of agitation over the danger of war. If we help them to see the situation clearly and to be convinced of the correctness of the communist standpoint, then it will be a real leadership of the people. In this way we will win the confidence of the masses and will be able to cure them of the illusions which the leader of SDP has created under orders of the bourgeoisie. However, if we decide to raise the call of alarm when the wolf is not even visible, we can be sure to find no response when finally it really pounces on us.

Notes

[1] President Coolidge of the United States set up a committee of experts under the auspices of the Reparations Commission, with General Charles G. Dawes as Chairman, to examine and recommend ways and means of balancing the budget of post-war Germany and stabilizing German currency. The committee met on 7 December 1923, and in April 1924 it submitted its proposals which came to be known as the Dawes Plan. Its essence was that 'reparations were to be paid from economic profits'. In 1924–5 'Germany had to mobilize 200 million gold marks to which would be added a loan of 800 million gold marks from the United States. In the first reparations year, Germany's payments would begin with one billion gold marks and reach a normal annuity of 2.5 million gold marks in 1928–9.' The plan was approved by the Reichstag and signed in London by the Reparations Commission and the representatives of the German government on 9 August 1924.

The Dawes Plan was followed in 1928 by the Young Plan, also named after the American Chairman of the Committee. Its aim was also to ensure Germany's economic recovery under American control and supervision. Reparations were revised downwards in 1929, a moratorium placed on them in 1931, and 'the slate was wiped clean in 1932'.

At the Disarmament Conference at Geneva the American Secretary of State Kellog proposed a pact for the renunciation of war.

The two plans and the proposed pact were seen by the Comintern as part of the American conspiracy to dominate Europe. In May 1924, the Comintern's economist, E. Varga, had published a booklet, *Rise and Fall of Capitalism*, in which he admitted that capitalism has succeeded for the time being in overcoming its acute post-war crisis by converting Germany into 'an industrial colony'. In Trotsky's book *Europa und Amerika*

(1926), the Dawes Plan was described as 'enslavement of the European working class by Anglo-Saxon capital with the help of French militarists'. 'The USA has emerged as the master capitalist of mankind.'

E. H. Carr, *International Relations between the Two World Wars*, London, 1947; A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, London, 1965; Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, Harvard, 1948.

[2] Aristide Briand, French Foreign Minister, negotiated the Locarno Pact (signed in London in December 1925) which was conceived as a 'European Concert of Powers' and a formal end of the First World War. It sought to reconcile France and Germany, brought Britain and Italy into the concert, and left both the United States and the Soviet Union outside the system. G. Suarez, *Briand, sa vie, son oeuvre*. However, the Communists saw Locarno as 'the political and military counterpart of the Dawes Plan'. In July 1929 the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI adopted a set of 'Theses on the International Situation' which proclaimed, *inter alia*, that 'no negotiations or even temporary agreements between the Macdonald Government and the USA will avert the inevitable armed conflict between the United States and Great Britain' (*Inprecor, IX*, 46, 4 September 1929).

[3] Dr Gustav Stresemann, German Foreign Minister, followed the 'policy of playing the East off against the West'. In April 1926 a German—Russian Treaty, valid initially for five years, was signed in Berlin by Stresemann and Krestinsky. The first article of the Treaty declared that the two governments 'will remain in friendly contact in order to come to an understanding on all political and economic questions affecting these countries'. The Treaty was renewed for another two years in 1932. Ruth Fischer, op. cit., pp. 524–7.

[4] From its very inception the Chinese Eastern Railway had been a source of conflict between China and Russia. In 1929, General Chang Hsueh-liang, son of Chang Tso-lin, seized the Chinese Eastern Railway and arrested its Soviet railway personnel; the Soviet Consulates in North Manchuria were closed, and on 16 August 1929 relations between the USSR and China were broken off by a Soviet government decree. In November Soviet military units crossed the Manchurian frontier. In December China and the Soviet Union signed the Khabarovsk Protocol 'which restored the *status quo ante* as far as the Chinese Eastern Railway was concerned'.

The Comintern saw in the 1929 CER incident an American plan to gain control of the railway and preparations 'for a combined attack by China and the imperialists on the USSR'.

In March 1935 the USSR sold the Chinese Eastern Railway to Japan, without regard to Nanking's protests.

Robert C. North, *Moscow and the Chinese Communists*, Stanford, 1963; Jane Degras, *The Communist International, Volume 3, 1929–1943*, London, 1971. SNR.

MY CRIME

An Open Letter to the Members of the Communist International

1929

Introductory editorial note

The English text of 'My Crime' which is reproduced here was published by M. N. Roy as a section of his book *Our Differences* (Saraswaty Library, Calcutta, pp. 25–43) in September 1938. That book has been out of print for quite some time. The 'Open Letter' is of considerable historical and biographical interest; it has also much topicality in view of the radical re-examination of the Stalin era and of the policies and conduct of the Soviet Union and the Communist International which is currently going on in Gorbachov's Russia.

The 'Open Letter' was originally published in German in Brandler's organ *Gegen den Strom* in its issue of 14 September 1929 under the title 'Meine Verbrechen: Offener Brief an die Mitglieder der Kommunistischen Internationale' (Issue No. 37, pp. 9–11). Although 'Roy's placing himself outside the ranks of the Communist International' was not officially announced till 13 December 1929 (*Inprecor*, IX, 69, p. 1470), the news had already appeared in the Opposition press on 7 September. On that date *Gegen den Strom* (No. 36, p.7) published the following note:

Comrade Roy is Excommunicated

> At the Xth plenary session of the Comintern some otherwise unknown Indian and Indonesian Communists declared at the request of Kuusinen, that Comrade Roy no longer be a member of the Party because of his participation in the publications of the Communist Opposition in Germany. Comrade Roy, the best known leader of the Indian Communists, and until recently a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, has thus been excluded without any formal proceedings. In this case they didn't even stage the excommunication-farce. They have deprived Comrade Roy of his party-membership without hearing him. These proceedings against Comrade Roy are a first-class scandal.
>
> Comrade Roy has been part of the Communist International since its inception. . . . His writings are among the best Marxist works on the colonial problem. We mention here only his book *India in Transition* which has also been published in German. Comrade Roy took a clear stand against the Comintern's move to an ultra-left course. In his articles for *Gegen den Strom* and the Offenbach paper *Volksrecht* he stood by us, an intrepid co-fighter, and has provided a series of valuable contributions especially on the questions of colonial policy.

The passage quoted above clearly indicates that Roy had already become a contributor not only to *Volksrecht* but also to *Gegen den Strom*. However, after going carefully through the 'Inhaltsverzeichnis' of *Gegen den Strom* I have not succeeded in finding any article under

Roy's signature prior to the issue of 14 September. Presumably he wrote under some assumed name (as in *Volksrecht*) or anonymously.

The issue which carried Roy's 'Open Letter' also provided a prefatory editorial note (Vorbemerkung) as follows:

> Comrade M. N. Roy, whom we have invited to speak here in his defence against the accusations by the Comintern, is one of the most outstanding leaders of the revolution in the colonies. As a very young person he was a leading member of the terrorist revolutionary nationalist party of India. In 1906 he was arrested for instigating an uprising, but his very youth saved him from the charge of high treason. He was in prison frequently, and since 1908 had to live underground in India. During 1914/15 he was actively involved in insurrections; then he went to China, Japan, the Philippines and established contacts there with the national revolutionary movements. In 1916 he became a Marxist in America. During 1917–19 he lived in Mexico, participated in the revolution there, founded the Communist Party of Mexico and was its secretary. Thereafter he went to Soviet Russia, where he worked as a leader in colonial affairs and was a member of the Executive of the Comintern. In 1927 he acted as representative of the Executive in the Communist Party of China.

Published in the issue of 14 September, the 'Open Letter' gave its date of composition as 7 September 1929. Initially I had thought of including our English translation of the original German version, but careful comparison of the German text and the Saraswaty Library edition's English text revealed no discrepancy, and I therefore decided in favour of the Saraswaty text. Roy was the author of both the German and English versions of the 'Open Letter'.

The Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) of which *Gegen den Strom* was the principal organ was founded in December 1928 by Heinrich Brandler (1881–1967) and August Thalheimer (1884–1948). In January 1929 they were both expelled from the Comintern and from the German and Soviet Communist parties. Any form of association with the Brandler–Thalheimer group was declared to be 'incompatible with membership of the Comintern'. Brandler and Thalheimer had been close associates of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in founding the Communist Party of Germany (Spartakusbund). Roy was personally very close to them throughout the 'twenties; in 1929 they were brought closer to each other by their common opposition to the Comintern policy adopted at the Sixth Congress.

For Brandler, Thalheimer and the German Communist Opposition Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus: Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, Europaische Verlagsanstalt; Branko Lazitch and M. N. Drachkovitch, *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern*, Stanford, 1973. Also see my introductory editorial note to the section. 'Selections from *Gegen den Strom*'. SNR.

My Crime

An Open Letter to the Members of the Communist International

For some time I have been standing before the 'sacred Guillotine' the mad application of which is causing such havoc to the International Communist movement. I have stood in that position for nearly a year, not shuddering with the fear for my head, but aghast at the incompetence of those who have usurped the leadership of the movement, and amazed at the temerity with which this incompetent and irresponsible leadership is driving the movement to rack and ruin. At last has come my turn, so inexplicably delayed. At the Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the C. I. my humble head was demanded by the gentle Kuusinen in his characteristic manner of shirking responsibility. Referring to my latest 'crime'—contribution to the press of the German Opposition—he wondered if after the commission of such a heinous crime one could still deserve to be a comrade of those whose views he represented. The stage was set for the purpose. The 'masses' responded.[1] The prompted cry–'*a la guillotine*' was raised from the obscure corner, and one connected with the Communist International nearly from its very foundation, active in the revolutionary movement for years previously, hitherto suspected of and criticized for alleged 'left deviations', was placed automatically outside the pale of the C. I. After some unfounded attacks by Losowskys and Schubins, obviously with the authority of the Russian delegation, Manuilsky clinched the affair by damning me as a 'renegade'. It was a very simple procedure. No evidence whatsoever was produced to show how a traditional 'leftist' has become a right opportunist, how one suddenly becomes a 'renegade' after more than twenty years' active service to the revolution. Kuusinen simply asserted that I proposed the policy of making a block with the Indian Nationalist Bourgeoisie, and Manuilsky roundly called me a 'renegade'.

This itself may not be sufficiently important to arrest the attention of the entire International. But it is important, and deserves attention as a symptom of the state of affairs at the top of the movement. Therefore, I consider it necessary to place before the C. I. the facts of the case.

The attack upon me suddenly began at the Sixth World Congress in which I was not present, owing to illness. In his report on the Colonial

Question Kuusinen attacked me as the father of the so-called theory of 'decolonization'. According to him, I had put forward the view that British Imperialism would gradually lead the Indian people to freedom. On that allegation I was characterized in the report as well as in the thesis (the tone was modified in the corrected stenogramme of the report and final version of the thesis) as 'lackey of imperialism'. The characterization would be perfectly correct, had the allegation been proved. That, however, was not done, although Kuusinen went to the extent of asserting that in the columns of the *Vanguard* and the *Masses*, which I edited, I had for years propagated this 'Social democratic theory'. The utter unfoundedness of the assertion is proved by the files of those journals. I challenge anybody to find one single passage in them which bears out Kuusinen's allegation. Then, those journals were published under my editorship as the central organ of the Communist propaganda in India from May 1922 to the beginning of 1928. (I am not responsible for the first eight months of 1927 when I was away in China.) During all that time, I was not once censored for right deviation. Indeed, criticism made occasionally by minor comrades was rather from the point of view groundlessly ascribed to me now, namely, overestimating the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie. In short, for nearly five years the leadership of the International considered my point of view, on the whole correct; otherwise I should have long ago been removed from the position I occupied. Now it is discovered that all the time I have been a Social Democratic lackey of imperialism. Logically, then, it must be admitted that until the Sixth Congress, the C. I. had had a wrong point of view as regards India. If the report and the thesis of the Sixth Congress contain the highest wisdom of Leninism, then, as far as the colonial (particularly Indian) question is concerned, Lenin, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Stalin, all in their respective turns, have been anti-Leninist, Social Democratic lackeys of imperialism. And this is precisely the purport of the resolution on the Colonial as well as on other questions of the Sixth Congress. They represent a serious deviation from the tactical teachings of Lenin. Therefore, I expressed my disagreement with them. This is one of my crimes for which I am sentenced to the 'Guillotine' of expulsion as a 'renegade' to Communism.

To revert to the theory of 'decolonization', the fatherhood of which is the ostensible cause of my victimization. The unfortunate term has a little history. While I was away in China (1927) a new comrade from India came to Moscow. In his report he emphasized on the rapid development of modern industry in India. Such a development, which all along I had pointed out as a basic feature of the situation in post-war India, inevitably produces two tendencies, which must be carefully observed by us for the purpose of adjusting our tactics to the realities of the situation. These tendencies are the sharpening of the class antagonism inside the nationalist movement, on the one side, and compromise between the nationalist bourgeoisie and foreign imperialism on the other. Industrialization of the country, even if it were done mainly with imperialist capital (which is not the case in India), is advantageous to the native bourgeoisie. These fight against imperialism because it obstructs the free development of their class. Consequently when imperialism, forced by its inner contradictions, permits, even encourages (as lately in the case of India), partial industrialization of a colonial country, the basis of antagonism between the native bourgeoisie and foreign imperialism narrows down. The nationalist united front tends to break up, and a new united front of the native bourgeoisie with foreign .imperialism is formed as against the working class. In such a situation, the native bourgeoisie outgrow the previous state of absolute colonial oppression. In summarizing the debate on the report of the Indian delegate, Bukharin suggested that the Commission set up for examining the question should report on the process of such 'decolonization'. (He used the term for the first time, evidently in a tentative and relative sense).

On my return I was charged to draft a resolution on the basis of the preparatory work accomplished by the Commission. The resolution drafted by me, which was never formally accepted (not because there was any serious objection to it, but because of the waning of interest in the subject), subsequently became the main weapon against me. It was in that document that all my heresies were discovered, when subsequently it became necessary to find evidence in support of a verdict already secretly pronounced against me for some unknown crime. If the document contained the testimony of my crime, why was it not published? It was never done, because the very document proves how atrociously groundless are the allegations against me.[2] Space does not permit extensive quotation, and I have not the means to publish such a lengthy document. Therefore I must be content with citing the most vital passages. After analysing the economic conditions of the country and giving facts marking the new tendencies of post-war colonial exploitation, I came to the following conclusion:

> Imperialism must proceed very cautiously in this new path which is as likely to lead it out of the post-war crisis, as to destruction. The implication of the new policy is gradual 'decolonization' of India which will be allowed eventually to evolve out of the state of 'dependency' to 'Dominion Status'. The Indian bourgeoisie, instead of being kept down as a potential rival, will be granted partnership in the economic development of the country under the hegemony of Imperialist finance. From a

> backward agricultural colonial possession, India will become a modern industrial country—member of 'the British Commonwealth of free nations'. India is in a process of 'decolonization' insofar as the policy, forced upon Imperialism by the post-war crisis of capitalism, abolishes the old, antiquated forms and methods of colonial exploitation in favour of new forms and new methods. The forces of production which were so far denied the possibilities of normal growth, are unfettered. The very basis of national economy changes. Old class relations are replaced by new class relations. The basic industry, agriculture, stands on the verge of a revolution. . .; the native bourgeoisie acquire an ever-increasing share in the control of the economic life of the country. These changes in the economic sphere have their political reflex. The unavoidable process of gradual 'decolonization' has in it the germs of the disruption of the empire.
>
> The Indian bourgeoisie outgrow the state of absolute colonial suppression. . . . in order to stabilize its economic basis, strengthen its position in India, British imperialism is obliged to adopt a policy which cannot be put into practice without making certain concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie. These concessions are not conquered by the nationalist bourgeoisie. They are gifts (reluctant, but obligatory) of imperialism. Therefore, the process of 'decolonization' is parallel to the process of the 'de-revolutionization of the nationalist bourgeoisie'.

It is obvious from the above quotation (of course only for the unprejudiced readers) that the term 'decolonization' is used tentatively by way of indicating a tendency, and relatively, only in connection with the bourgeoisie who constitute a very small fraction of the entire population. Nowhere is it stated that the tendency affects the entire people. Much less is it even implied that there is the least possibility of the Indian people being free with the sanction of imperialism. On the contrary, it is clearly asserted that the process of certain improvement in the condition of the bourgeoisie is the result of a plan to intensify the exploitation of the nation as a whole. Nevertheless, this is the cross on which I was crucified before the Sixth Congress of the C. I.

Now about the perverse love that according to Kuusinen I have suddenly developed for the Nationalist bourgeoisie. Here again my entire past record ever since the Second Congress of the C. I. (1920) gives lie to the assertion made by Kuusinen. In the Second Congress I disagreed with Lenin about the role of the bourgeoisie in the colonial revolutionary movement. My views on the question are recorded in the thesis adopted by the Second Congress as supplementary to those drafted by Lenin. I can simply ask everybody who wants to judge me on the basis of my own views and actions, to read my writings. In the draft-resolution referred to above I wrote in September 1927:

> All these factors taken together determine the character of the Indian

> Nationalist bourgeoisie. They are no longer a revolutionary force. Not only from the point of view of the internal conditions of India, but also from the point of view of present world conditions, the Indian bourgeoisie are rallied on the side of counter-revolution. They cannot and do not lead or participate in the struggle for national freedom (completely outside the British empire). . . Indian revolution must still realize the program of bourgeois democracy, but it is no longer a bourgeois revolution; because it can and will succeed only by breaking the bounds of capitalist society.

Still the Tenth Plenum of the International Executive puts me outside the pale of the C. I. on the ground that I advocated the opportunist policy of a block with the nationalist bourgeoisie. The present leadership of the International obviously has a very low opinion about the intelligence of the rank and file. In the Tenth Plenum a new charge could be brought against me—writing in the press of the Brandlerist renegades (Opposition to the Communist Party of Germany). This made the thing easier for the ruling clique. It was no longer necessary to examine what was written; the fact that it was written in the Opposition Press was enough to damn the writer irrespective of what he actually wrote.

Kuusinen made a feeble effort to answer my criticism of the resolution of the Sixth Congress, and of the catastrophic, ultra-left, sectarian, Trotskyist line followed on the strength of that resolution. What he did, however, was not to reply to my criticism. That he could not do, for my criticism consisted mostly of pointing out facts proving that the Sixth Congress resolution was based upon a false interpretation of the situation. He simply distorted what I said. He did not quote me. He simply told the Plenum what he read in my writing. In an article to the organ of the German Opposition I had pointed out that just when the Swaraj Party was putting up a parliamentary resistance to imperialist autocracy in connection with the Public Safety Bill, a manifesto of the C. I. ended with the slogan: 'Down with Imperialism: Down with the Swaraj Party.'[3] To point out the tactical blunder of issuing the slogan at the moment did not mean that I considered the Swaraj Party as friendly to Communism. On the contrary, for years, I had combated the illusion entertained by the C. I. leadership regarding the revolutionary role of the Swaraj Party. Here, again, I can only refer to the records for evidence. Unable to justify the grievous mistake of issuing such a stupid slogan against the Swaraj Party at that very unfortunate moment, Kuusinen resorts to the cheap demagogy of ascribing to me opportunist illusions about the Swaraj Party. For example, he goes to the extent of asserting that I have now 're-baptized the Swarajists as Independents'. If he were honest in his manner of conducting a political discussion, he would not make such an absurd assertion; for, nowhere is there the least ground for it. The nationalist bourgeoisie cannot be effectively exposed in their compromising role by simply shouting stupid, provocative slogans. For this purpose, the Communists must follow the policy of class differentiation. The petty bourgeois masses must be supported in their revolt against the reformist leadership of the big bourgeoisie, notwithstanding that this revolt is often weak and vacillating. And precisely on this crucial point the present line of the C. I. goes far over the head of the situation. The policy of isolating ourselves on the Olympian heights of sectarianism drives the petty bourgeois masses in the direction of Fascism. The Indian experts of the C. I. apparatus would do well to observe this dangerous tendency of the situation. A Leninist policy of United Front would have transformed the petty bourgeois League of Independence into a powerful weapon to develop the revolution. This is a valuable lesson of the experience in China. Kuusinen's incoherent philippics against me do not in the least change the tragic fact that the present leadership of the C. I. advised the young, inexperienced Communists in India to withdraw into their very small shell, precisely when the petty bourgeois masses were coming towards the working class, to be led in the national revolutionary struggle. Kuusinen could not possibly dispute the fact that the petty bourgeois masses 'remain revolutionary', but he would not have anything to do with their organizations nor would he permit the proletariat to establish any organizational connection with them. My criticism of this sectarianism is interpreted as a demand for an opportunist block with the *entire bourgeoisie*.

The Sixth Congress attributed to me a Social Democratic theory without presenting before the International the document in which the heresy is supposed to be contained. Not being present at the Congress, I could not defend my position, and explain my point of view as it really is. Soon after the report and resolutions of the Congress were published, I submitted to the Executive Committee of the C. I. a comprehensive statement of my views.[4] The Statement also contained the criticism of Kuusinen's report and disagreement with the tactical line laid down by the Sixth Congress on the basis of that report. Why did not the International Executive publish that document? If it contained the evidence of opportunist deviation on my part, its publication would have been sufficient to condemn me. It is another long document. Is it not logical to believe that the present leadership of the C. I. suppressed the document, because they are not able to dispute the facts and arguments stated therein proving the incorrectness of the report and thesis of the Sixth Congress?

The two main deviations attributed to me contradict each other. I could not possibly maintain them both unless I were a lunatic. To point out that the Indian bourgeoisie are outgrowing the condition of absolute colonial suppression, is not a Social Democratic deviation. On my part, I simply point out a tendency which characterizes the situation. The term 'decolonization' is a secondary issue. A Marxist must deal in facts, not in terms and catch-phrases. The point at issue at the Sixth Congress is whether the forms and methods of colonial exploitation in the post-war period of capitalist decline must necessarily be the same (are the same) as in the pre-war days of capitalist prosperity and expansion. I maintain they are not. This I proved exhaustively in the statement on the discussion of the Indian question in the Sixth Congress. If I maintain this point of view, I cannot possibly advocate a policy of block with the nationalist bourgeoisie, unless I proposed a counter-revolutionary block, and I have not yet been accused of having done so. What I proposed and still propose, is that in the given conditions, Indian Communists must take the initiative in organizing the broadest possible United Front of all the oppressed and exploited social elements under the hegemony of the proletariat, with a revolutionary democratic programme, to conduct the fight simultaneously on two fronts—against foreign imperialism and the native bourgeoisie. The resolution of the Sixth Congress, in principle does not reject such united front; but practically does so by prohibiting the Communists to enter into any multi-class party. The resolution is full of glaring contradictions. On the one hand, it is maintained that imperialist exploitation *of the entire nation* is intensified; on the other hand, it is stated that the nationalist bourgeoisie are counter-revolutionary. Why have these deserted the struggle against imperialism? Obviously the latter is somehow accommodating them within the framework of colonial exploitation of the country as a whole. If they are still as oppressed as ever, and there is no prospect of their position being improved, they must remain a revolutionary factor. So, behind the radical phrases of the present leadership there still lurks the shadow of past opportunism. Ultra-leftism is likely to degenerate into opportunism any day when put to severe revolutionary test. If the Quixotic Soviet Republic of India is not realized through the magic method of mouthing catch-phrases, the pendulum may swing again to the other extreme, and the policy of opportunist alliance with the counter-revolutionary nationalist bourgeoisie, be revived.

The crimes attributed to me I have not committed. My offence is that I lay claim to the right of independent thinking, and this is not permissible in the present critical period through which the C. I. is passing. I was not declared a 'renegade' and placed outside the pale of the official International, so long as I did not speak out my disagreement. The gag of silence was imposed upon me, the all-mighty apparatus depriving me of all the means of expression. In other words, for the unpardonable crime of independent thinking, I would have been quietly buried into oblivion, had I not dared raise my voice. But the duty of a revolutionary sometimes transgresses the narrow limits of arbitrary discipline, . . . I was placed in a position where I found it was my revolutionary duty to join the Opposition against the present leadership which is ruining the International.

I disagree with all the resolutions of the Sixth Congress, not only with that on the Indian Question. If the mistake were on one particular question, it might be advisable to wait hoping that it would be corrected in course of time. But the mistaken line pursued in India is but a small part of a huge blunder. Therefore, it is not permissible to keep quiet. The International is in a crisis which is manifested by the composition and exercise of its leadership.

Notes

[1] At the Tenth Plenum, Roy's erstwhile lieutenant Luhani repudiated him. He called Roy 'another edition of Nehru junior' who 'masks his programme of bourgeois counter-revolution behind pseudo-radical phrases'. After Kuusinen had observed in parenthesis—'I do not know if I can still call him Comrade Roy'—the Indonesian delegate Musso responded: 'Roy is no longer our Comrade'. Lozovsky declared that 'Roy is a Menshevik', who unfortunately 'has been for all these years the Comintern's only link with Indian Communists'. Roy's expulsion was, however, not announced formally till December 1929. *Protokoll 10 Plenum des EKKI Moskau 3 Juli bis 19 Juli 1929*, Hamburg–Berlin.

[2] For the document, *see* 'Draft Resolution on the Indian Question' in the earlier section of this volume.

[3] See the article 'The Way to National Revolution in India' in *Das Volksrecht*, 24 May 1929, in the earlier section of this volume.

[4] For the statement, *see* 'On the Indian Question in the Sixth Congress of the C. I.' in the earlier section of this volume.

SNR.

Selections from *Das Volksrecht*

September–November
1929

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The English Trade Union Congress*

The Times, the authoritative spokesman of British imperialism, wrote in its commentary on the address of Ben Tillet, who presided over the annual conference of the Trade Union Congress held at the beginning of this month, the following significant sentence: 'His speech contained in the main a modern economic programme which could be accepted by most people who model themselves on English liberalism.' This opinion was by no means the view of the conservative organ alone. It only echoed the view of the entire capitalist press.

The Trade Union Congress met this time in a very complex situation. The fact that the Labour Party is now the ruling party did not allow the Congress to deceive the workers with cheap demagogy. At the same time, the pressure from below was too strong to be disregarded. The working masses are far from any idea of a rebellion against the Labour Party. Nevertheless, they expect the Labour Government to go ahead with its programme of reform. The Trade Union Congress as the organ of organized workers' movement has, in the eyes of the masses, the duty to take care of this. This expectation could not be fulfilled. In the present situation the Trade Union Congress failed to carry out this task. If it had tried to represent even the demand for reform of the working class, it would have immediately encountered the offensive of the Labour Government. It, therefore, pushed aside the burning question which faced the workers' movement, and diverted its full attention to high-level politics and the plans of economic reconstruction.

The structure of the British Trade Union Congress places it outside every effective control by the masses from below. The members of the trade unions cannot elect the delegates to the Congress. The powerful bureaucratic machinery obstructs every direct pressure which the collective trade union movement may try to exert on the Congress; the bureaucracy does so by virtue of the powers accorded to it by official politics. Even the delegates of the Congress, who are all officials of the trade unions, do not have it in their power to influence the decisions of the Congress alone, because they vote not individually. but *en bloc*. Entire delegations vote in favour of or against a resolution, and their opinions are regarded as the opinion of the entire trade unions which they represent. That is not very different from what happens when decisions are taken within the delegation on the basis of a slender majority.

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* Translated from *Das Volksrecht*, No. 38, 26 September 1929. Omission of a passage is indicated by an ellipsis (...). Signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

At the same time it must be noticed that the bureaucratic machine would not have been able to exercise its powers for long if it faced a strong rebellion of the working masses. The general trust of the masses is the condition for the smooth functioning of the bureaucratic machinery. The view that the trade union bureaucracy cannot be challenged successfully through a determined revolt of the members, is totally false. This was definitely shown at the last Trade Union Congress. For nearly two years now the trade union bureaucracy is advocating a pact with the industrialists for the so-called 'industrial truce'. The top leaders of the Trade Union Congress have officially discussed the matter in long conferences with the organizations of the industrialists and they have come to definite decisions. In a word, support of the capitalist policy of rationalization in the industries has become the officially declared policy of the Trade Union Congress. In spite of all this, the delegation of the Union of Engine-operators had in the last Congress demanded that the negotiations with the organizations of industrialists should be stopped and the corresponding resolutions of the earlier conferences should be annulled. The bureaucracy of this trade union is no less reactionary than the rest of the trade union bureaucracies in England. But still it could not prevent the voice of the people from reaching the Congress.

In practically every trade union the Opposition is present even in the initial phase. In order to develop this growing opposition, the Communists need to stand by the people. Instead, they are behaving as propagandists of an abstract socialism or as radical agitators against such reformist leaders as still enjoy the trust of the masses. They are doing this rather than developing the Opposition step by step. The result is that they are easily thrown out of the trade unions by the reformist leaders, and the Opposition elements in the trade unions are robbed of their communist and leftist leaders. The Trade Union Congress has also adopted a resolution which strongly calls for the expulsion of the communists from the unions. The catastrophic trade union politics of the communists, which culminates in the fruitless agitation for the creation of new 'revolutionary trade unions', has made it easy for the Congress to accuse the communists as 'splitters' in front of the general public.[1]

The situation is favourable for the development of a popular stand against the Labour Government and against the trade union bureaucracy. Since Labour came into office, the wages in the textile industry have been affected. The Labour Government has sanctioned reduction in wages. At present a severe crisis is raging in the coal-mines. Here also, the industrialists are sure to get the support of the Labour Government. The Trade Union Congress has not raised a single formal protest against the reduction in wages in the textile industry. It has also not made any promise to defend the miners in view of the direct offensive of the capitalists . . .

The Trade Union Congress has not only drawn up a detailed plan of capitalist rationalization—a plan which has been warmly greeted by the bourgeois press; it has also given its blessings to the plan for the 'development of the empire'. Ben Tillet, as president of the Congress, has, in his welcome address, which is supposed to express his personal opinion formally and which, according to the common procedure of English Trade Union Congresses, is never submitted to discussion though in reality it announces the decisive programme for the next year, spoke at large on two issues: the first has already become official policy and the second is now being placed as the order of the day. The first is the policy of 'industrial truce aimed at supporting the capitalist rationalization, and the second is the 'development of the empire' for gaining self-sufficient economic unity. One who says A must also say B. The so-called 'modernization' of the colonial exploitation is a necessary precondition for the rationalization of the capitalist economy in England. Through the official announcement of this programme in the presidential address the Trade Union Congress has taken such a reactionary step, that even Brailsford, who advocates the transformation of the British empire into a 'Federation of Free Nations' as representing the opinion of the leftist social-democrats, had to express the apprehension that this path would lead to plain imperialism. This apprehension of the leftist social-democrats is only an expression of their embarrassment. Tillet has only too clearly expressed what lies hidden under their liberal mask. The Trade Union Congress through this announcement has openly got itself admitted into the politics of colonial exploitation, in order to place the organized workers' movement as a support of the imperialist politics of the Labour Government. This announcement was important enough to make even Snowden find time, during his efforts in the Hague, to openly congratulate Tillet on his speech.

That time is past when colonial exploitation could contribute to the growth of a working-class aristocracy in the metropolis. The decline of British imperialism has, on the contrary, undermined the foundation of working-class aristocracy, which was also the basis of trade union bureaucracy. These issues are not yet clear to the simple worker. He not only continues to have faith in the reformist leaders, but also sees himself as a shareholder of the colonial possessions. He believes that the plans for economic reconstruction and for the development of the empire, as put forth by his leaders, will definitely improve his condition.

The communist tactics, in such a situation, should not limit themselves to denouncing the reformists as agents of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. The reformists cannot but betray working-class interests in their pursuance of capitalist rationalization. Through the exposure of these politics and through the structuring of the demands on the basis of class-struggle and popular interest the communists can organize a popular revolt against the bureaucratic apparatus of the trade union. Such a tactic does not produce the illusion that the reformist leaders can be forced to represent the politics of the working-class. Rather, it unveils their true nature before the masses and makes the working-class ready for the revolutionary influx. The Trade Union Congress has only shown once again that the activities of the Labour Government create conditions which, through a correct united-front tactic and trade union politics as represented by the Communist Party Opposition, can be utilized to set the masses even in England on the path of a revolutionary class-struggle.

Note

[1] The Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU or Profintern), held in Moscow in March–April 1928, and the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (July–September 1928) stressed the need for 'a vigorous struggle against the idea of unity at any price', and called for 'independent leadership of the industrial struggle' by communists and RILU supporters. The Tenth Plenum of ECCI (3 to 19 July 1929) even more sharply underlined 'the decisive importance of independent leadership of strikes on the part of the communist revolutionary trade union vanguard, without and against the reformist trade union apparatus'. The reformists were called 'social fascists'; emphasis was shifted from trade unions to factory councils which were to be captured for 'carrying out the tactic of class against class'. This policy isolated the communists from the trade union movement, and contributed to the defeat and destruction of both Social Democrats and Communists in Germany by the National Socialists. *See* Franz Borknau, *World Communism*, pp. 332–56. SNR.

Fantasy and Reality*

The Sixth Congress of the Communist International has advanced theories which do not agree with the teachings of Lenin and often stand in opposition to the basic principles of Marxism. These theories do not rest on facts, but on figments of the imagination. The course of events since the Sixth World Congress has proved that. Never before did ignorance about the actual situation become so strikingly clear as in the main speech on the colonial question in the Sixth Congress. The speech itself repeatedly emphasized its poor and deficient knowledge about the topic it was handling. It pictured not the India of today, but an India of a quarter century ago. All those who had shown a different picture of India (incidentally, they were mostly Indians), were accused of defending imperialism. The discussions about the economic condition of the country and the post-war forms and methods of colonial exploitation followed the trend of grouping all these developments under the catchword 'decolonization'. The ostensible father of this theory was not judged on the basis of what he actually believes. He was accused of certain deviations which the theory ascribed to him supposedly contains.

The issue was originally not 'decolonization' (an unfortunate expression which was used only casually and relatively) but 'industrialization'. The content of this theory was not what Kuusinen totally unfoundedly believed it to be—namely, that the Indian people as a whole would be led to independence by English imperialism. Never before has such a nonsensical belief been advanced. The actual thesis was that the politics of English imperialism is no longer aimed at hindering the growth of modern industries in India under the present conditions, as was the case till the beginning of the present century. It was further pointed out that this change in the forms and methods of colonial exploitation was the result of the inner contradiction of imperialism. Ever since this inner contradiction has become manifest in the post-war period, the process of industrialization has gained momentum This evaluation of the situation—the tendencies which point to the transformation in the relations between India and imperialist England (a relation which is still essentially one of colonial exploitation)—is based on actual facts. Such a possible change in the forms and methods of colonial exploitation was already theoretically predicted by Lenin before the war in *Imperialism.*[1] To ignore this possibility totally, as the Sixth Congress did, is to take a step away from Lenin's conception of imperialism towards Kautsky's theory of colonial expansion.[2] The result of the World War has proved Lenin to be right and Kautsky to be wrong. It has shown that the agrarian character of a country is not the necessary precondition for colonial exploitation. It has proved that even industrially developed countries can be brought under colonial subjugation. In spite of this theoretical possibility, expressed through the monopolistic role of finance-capital, and of actual conditions, the Sixth Congress stated clearly that the industrial growth of a colonial country is diametrically opposed to the interests of imperialism. Proceeding from this anti-Leninist, Kautskyian standpoint, the Congress discovered that the characteristic feature of Indian economy today is 'agrarian'. It declared that the politics of imperialism is still striving to check immediately the growth of modern industry. It affirmed that the economic significance of the existing modern industries is negligible, that they are 'war industries', and decreed that to accept the possibility or rather the fact of modern industry in a colonial country is to make a social-democratic deviation. Industrialization was regarded as synonymous with 'decolonization'; reality was disregarded as a consequence of this rosy fantasy.

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* Translated from *Das Volksrecht*, No. 40, 4 October 1929; signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

It was apparent that the Congress had not discussed the matter thoroughly. Kuusinen revised again and again the shorthand notes of his speech and final address. The views that he had presented were changed, improved and completed. The final draft was first published weeks after the Congress got over.[3] In view of this fact one may assume that the debate on such an important issue cannot be regarded as settled on the basis of such insufficient discussion. In fact, it has been noted in the official documents that the discussions need to be continued further. As the principal representative of a view that was discarded by the Congress, I, therefore, considered it as my right to submit a detailed statement of the entire issue. That was all the more important because I was not present at the Congress. I did not present my interpretation to express views contrary to those taken by the World Congress, but to contribute to the discussion. The content of my report rested mainly on the reality of the inner contradiction in post-war imperialism and the new forms and methods of colonial exploitation that have resulted from this contradiction. In other words, I wanted to set the discussion on the right track, to make it regard the actual situation as the fundamental starting point, unaffected by the artificially constructed theory of 'decolonization'. I placed reality in contrast to imagination. However, my presentation was neither taken up as a material for discussion, nor was any attempt made to refute the facts mentioned in it. I have been convinced by my investigations that English imperialism has given up the old policy of obstructing the growth of modern industries in India. This exposition is still waiting to be refuted—not through the usual official method of showering invectives, but through facts. If the facts (mentioned by me) are published, they and the conclusions based on them would need to be refuted with the help of facts!

In the meantime, I am pointing to certain other facts which have come up since the time of the Congress and which corroborate my interpretation and reveal more and more the anti-Leninist character of the Congress resolution.

1. The decline in the export of capital from England to India in the years 1925–27 was mentioned in the Congress speech as a proof of the imperialist politics of blocking Indian industrialization. In my presentation I pointed out that this decline was not due to any imperialist design regarding India, but was the result of reduction in accumulation in the mother country itself, which largely limited England's chances of exporting capital. The present year can prove to be a turning point in this respect. The first foreign loan of the year, which was taken in London, was a ten million pound loan of the Indian Government. Two months later, another 5.2 million was given to India. The major portion of the money was lent to the railways, for the construction of locomotive factories and other works to meet railway requirements. That means that capital was exported to India not in the form of locomotives and other materials needed for railway construction, as earlier, but as a means to help in the production of these things in India itself. This transformation in the function of the exported capital was occasioned by the fact that in the past year the Indian railways bought a large part of the locomotives in Germany for a lower price than that offered by the English factory owners. To begin production in India is the way to keep the cheap German products away from the biggest colony of England.

2. In order to refute the baseless assumption that there is increased oppression of the Indian bourgeoisie by the British which the Sixth Congress upheld, I showed in my work that the present imperialist politics consists in transforming the unproductive wealth concentrated in the hands of the upper classes of India into productive capital under the hegemony of finance-imperialism. This is moreover proved by the fact that while the Government of India borrowed 15 million pounds in London, in India it took a loan of 270 million rupees. In the last five years 1080 million rupees were raised in India as against 34.5 million pounds imported from England. As the Finance Minister of the Government of India explained when he placed

the budget for the current year, 'the finances should rest on Indian sources as far as possible'. He also made the following significant comment: 'If all the money that is spent on private imports of gold and silver could be made available for the construction of productive undertakings, India's need for foreign capital would vanish totally.' Why is imperialism so enthusiastic about making India independent of import of capital? Because England has very little free capital to export. If the restriction on the import of capital for India was not maintained India would have been flooded with capital from other countries, particularly from America. In order to strengthen its position against the threatening offensive by more powerful rivals, English imperialism has been forced to win the support of the Indian bourgeoisie and to pay a price for this urgently-needed help. That price was the guarantee of a large space for the manoeuvres of the native bourgeoisie; in other words, raising productive power of India in the 'industrialization' of the country.

3. Not only American trade but also American capital has, in the last few years, forced its way into the Indian areas reserved for England. Before the war trade between India and America was negligible. Now it amounts to more than one-third of the trade between India and England. Of late American capital has secured half the control over the very important hydro-electric project in India. If the machines for this and the other branches of industry are not produced in India, their import will no longer be a monopoly of England. They will be more and more imported from America.

4. In a speech which the former Finance Minister of the Government of India, at present one of the Directors of the Bank of England, Basil Blackett gave at a meeting in London on 5 June, it was declared: 'India has reached a level where her annual savings are enough to create the entire new capital that is needed for investment. If a reasonable advance in money and financial transactions is guaranteed, India will soon have an annual surplus of capital.' In this phase of decline of capitalism, the forms and methods of colonial exploitation must be different from those in the phase of capitalist growth. The reduction in accumulation in the mother country must be balanced by the building up of new capital in the colonies. For this purpose the wealth of India which has remained unproductive needs to be given an incentive to change itself into productive capital.

5. Metals, textiles and a range of other industries have got privileges on duty. Now, protective measures for the chemical and paint industries, which develop only in an advanced stage of industrialization, are being considered.

6. At the beginning of this year, the new Governor of the

important province of Bombay explained in a speech in England:

> Large-scale capital investments in India which are being prepared or are being planned, promise a rejuvenation of England's industries. The rising standard of living in India will probably favour the English luxury-goods industries. The growing demand for machines and other materials for the improvement of communications, which the new politics of 'industrialization' has given rise to, generates the best hopes.

The problem of markets has again become acute for imperialism. The native industry cannot be rationalized without a simultaneous reduction in the internal market. The capacity of the colonial markets must therefore be promoted. In the period of decline imperialism is sometimes forced to reduce its pressure on the economic life of the colonies.

These are only a few facts selected out of several. A thorough analysis of the situation would show how completely wrong the resolution of the Sixth Congress is. The tenth Plenum was also flush with fantastic visions where reality was blatantly ignored. The omission of a proper evaluation of the situation would lead inevitably to a confusion in political orientation and tactics. India has received her share of this confusion, which has been served to her by the present leaders of the Communist International. This confusion in India is all the more deplorable, because here the situation is extremely favourable for the growth of a revolutionary mass struggle against imperialism.

Notes

[1] Lenin wrote *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* in Zurich in the spring of 1916. He drew largely on J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism* (London, 1902) and to a lesser extent on Rudolf Hilferding's *Das Finanz Kapital*, 1910. In view of Tsarist censorship, Lenin's book had to be written in an 'Aesopian' form, that is, in an allusive and roundabout way to evade censorship. It was published in Russia in April 1917. After the revolution, Lenin barely managed to find time to make some revisions and clarifications in the text when it was published in French and German editions in 1920.

According to Lenin, the essential features of imperialism were: 1) substitution of free competition by capitalist monopolies; 2) merging of bank capital with industrial capital and creation of a financial oligarchy; 3) extreme importance of export of capital as distinguished from export of commodities; 4) formation of international capitalist monopolies; 5) completion of the territorial division of the whole world among the great capitalist powers. (Lenin, *Imperialism*, in *Selected Works* Vol. I, Moscow, 1946, p. 709). Lenin also maintained that imperialism was characterized by 'parasitism and decay of capitalism', 'by the extraordinary growth of a category of *bondholders* (*rentiers*) who live by "clipping coupons", who take no part in production.' (Ib., p. 717). Imperialism 'sets the seal of parasitism on the whole country which lives by the exploitation of labour of several overseas countries and colonies', and this makes it possible to corrupt sections of the working class, using a part of the enormous super-profits to bribe the latter in a thousand different ways (Ib., p. 738).

[2] Before World War I Karl Kautsky (1854–1938) was generally recognized as Europe's leading Marxist theoretician. Lenin, who acknowledged him as one of his mentors, later turned against him and subjected him to merciless attacks. According to Kautsky, imperialism is 'a product of highly developed industrial capitalism (which) consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control or to annex increasingly big *agrarian* [Kautsky's italics] regions irrespective of what nations inhabit those regions'. He also held that 'from a purely economic point of view it is not impossible that capitalism will yet go through a new phase, that of the extension of the policy of the cartels to foreign policy, the phase of ultra-imperialism' (*Die Neue Zeit*, 11 Sept. 1914). Against these views Lenin specifically argued that 'the characteristic feature of imperialism is *not* industrial capital *but* finance capital . . . it strives to annex *not only* agricultural regions but even highly industrialized regions', and that the concept of ultra-imperialism was ultra-nonsense because *under capitalism* there are no means of removing the disparity between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and spheres of influence for finance capital on the other side—other than by resorting to war. (Lenin, op. cit., p.713–17. Lenin's italics).

[3] The Sixth Congress (described by Bukharin as the 'Comintern's Long Parliament') was held from 17 July to 1 Sept.; Kuusinen's Report on 'the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies' introducing the Colonial Theses was not published till 4 October in *Inprecor* (Vol. 8, No. 68); his concluding speech was published on 21 November (*Inprecor*, Vol. 8, No. 81) in which he conceded that 'in such great colonial countries as India, the industrial development forges ahead, even if it proceeds with very great difficulty and at a very retarded pace. I am not at all asserting that British imperialism is in a position to stop this advance.' The 'Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and semi-Colonies' were published in *Inprecor* on 12 December 1928 (Vol. 8, No. 88).

According to a letter in the Trotsky Archives at Harvard, 'from an unnamed correspondent who clearly held some kind of position in the Comintern and attended the Congress' (Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. II, pp. 452 *et seq.*), 'the ECCI had not discussed the reports from the sections or the items on the agenda', there was 'not a single convinced defender of the programme or the colonial theses', and Ercoli (Togliatti) who was a co-rapporteur with Kuusinen on the colonial question told him (the writer of the letter) that he had not at all seen the colonial theses and had not any idea what Kuusinen was going to talk about.

Ignorance did not prevent prolonged debate on the colonial question nor distorted presentation of Roy's view. The majority of the British delegates were critical of Kuusinen's presentation, but they also protected themselves by dissociating from Roy. Kuusinen admitted that there were some very 'serious errors' in the draft, but while he made some concessions to the British delegates he stuck to his distortion of Roy. The draft theses were referred to a special commission which included Bukharin, Kuusinen, Clemens Dutt and D. Petrovsky (A. J. Bennett). With some amendments and a good many addenda the theses in their final form were adopted ten days later by the Congress. *Protokoll des 6 Welt Kongresses der Kommunistischen International* 4 vols., Hamburg 1928; and the issues of *Inprecor* from 25 July 1928 (Vol. 8, No. 39) to 27 December 1928 (Vol. 8, No. 91). SNR.

The Russian Revolution: Its place in History*

Twelve years ago the working class in Russia captured political power. The proletarian revolution began in a country where the tasks of the bourgeois revolution were not yet accomplished. The proletariat started the work of forming a new social order in a part of the world where capitalism had only insufficiently laid the base for a socialist economy. These special conditions under which the Russian revolution occurred determine its proper character.

The Russian revolution is a historic happening that refutes totally the mechanical social democratic interpretation of the Marxian principle of social development. According to this interpretation, proletarian revolution can happen only in the most developed capitalist countries, and socialism emerges out of capitalist society in course of time without any trouble. Those who imagine such 'wise' preachings to be those of Marx opine that the proletariat should wait patiently till the bourgeoisie takes the task in its hand and brings socialism to the promised land. The quintessence of their theory is that socialism will be the handiwork, not of the proletariat, but of the bourgeoisie. In their scheme of social revolution there is no place for the subjective factor, for the action of the proletariat. In their hands socialism becomes fatalism. It is transmuted into a metaphysical system—a form of scientific religion—according to which all happenings are predestined and predetermined. In the name of 'science', the working class is thus fed on a new belief that predestination presupposes the existence of a higher power that is beyond the human sphere of influence. This old and 'trusted' principle of reliance on God is smuggled into the proletarian philosophy of life (world-view) by the social democratic high priests of Marxism. But once the subjective factor is debarred from the right of initiative, revolution also comes to be put under 'taboo', and socialism may then only shine in the distant horizon as a forbidden paradise. If everything occurs as predestined by an invisible and uncontrollable power, then no one has the right to try to overthrow the existing order. In this way parliamentary democracy becomes the *summum bonum* of political philosophy, capitalism comes to be regarded as an everlasting phenomenon, the attempt of the bourgeoisie to stabilize the crumbling capitalist system at the cost of the working class is glorified as the 'second Industrial Revolution', and coalition with the bourgeoisie becomes the political creed of social democracy. The Russian revolution is a scathing verdict of history on the obtuseness of social democracy and its miscomprehension and abandonment of Marxism.[1]

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* Translated from *Das Volksrecht*, No. 45. 9 Nov. 1929; signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

The most important lesson of the Russian revolution is that in every critical situation which arises in the course of a revolution, the subjective factor plays the most decisive role. Marx taught us that capitalism would find a way out of every crisis if the proletariat did not cause its destruction. The historic mission of the proletariat is not to wait passively for the transformation of the capitalist society into a socialist one—a process which will never occur unless the proletariat, the pioneer of the new social order, destroys the rotten capitalist society. 'The proletariat is the grave-digger of capitalism.' It will have to wait eternally at the open grave if it cannot itself throw the rotten body of capitalist society into it. According to the vulgar, social-democratic interpretation of Marxism, the revolutionary action of the Russian proletariat from November 1917 onwards was a grave mistake. It was a mistake, according to them, because the proletariat took up in its own hands the task of building socialism in an industrially backward country, before capitalism could play its part in guiding its social development. The wise critics of the Russian revolution would have been much more pleased if the proletariat had helped the bourgeoisie to destroy the Czarist absolutism in order to launch a period of democratic development in political and economic spheres and thus to reach the 'one-way' path to the distant paradise of socialism. By a wrong estimation of the existing forces these critics not only underplay the subjective factor; in their judgement they even deny the given objective conditions. The destruction of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat when the former had hardly attained power on the ruins of Czarist absolutism illuminated the entire situation, which showed clearly the incapability of the bourgeoisie to lead the revolution. In view of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, further development of the country could take either of two directions—either the restoration of the earlier condition with a few guaranteed concessions to the bourgeoisie, or further development of the revolution from bourgeois democracy to proletarian socialism. The revolution stepped on the second path. The working class won the leadership of the half-complete bourgeois revolution, which was to be completed under the banner of proletarian revolution. That is the fundamental characteristic of the Russian revolution. The proletariat did not tolerate the reconstruction of the old, sinking social order simply because the bourgeoisie was unable to eradicate it root and branch. As the proletariat demanded that the bourgeoisie, which had come to power with the help of the proletariat, should root out the old order completely through the destruction of feudalism, the bourgeoisie allied itself with the counter-revolution. It is evident that the bourgeois revolution could have been carried out only partially, if the proletariat had not seized power at that time. So the November revolution was a result of the combination of favourable objective conditions with a correct assessment and application of the subjective factors.

In the earlier periods of bourgeois revolution there were moments in which the proletariat tried to capture power when the bourgeoisie came to an understanding with the older powers. The uprising of the Paris proletariat under the leadership of the Hebertists and the old Cordeliers to prevent the degeneration of the Jacobinian dictatorship into Girondist bourgeois revolution was also crushed. Babeuf's attempt a few years later met with the same fate. The Blanquists fared no better in the revolution of 1848. The Paris Commune fell after a heroic struggle.[2] The Bolsheviks suffered defeat in 1905. But in 1917 a new page was opened in history. The working class captured power in a country and stood its ground against furious offensives by the international bourgeoisie. The working class could not be defeated as in earlier cases, because the bourgeoisie had outplayed its role of a revolutionary social class and could not once again be a revolutionary factor in Russia.

The defeat of the proletariat in Germany and in a number of other smaller countries in Europe does not change the fact that the November revolution in Russia opened the era of proletarian revolution in the whole world. The victory of the Russian proletariat in contrast to the defeat of the German working class only brings into focus one important principle of development of the revolution, namely—that the chain must be broken at its weakest points. The proletariat must start crushing its enemies at the weakest point of their front. As such the weakness of the bourgeoisie, the incomplete development of capitalism cannot be passed as valid arguments against the capture of power by the proletariat in Russia. On the contrary, these factors contributed to the victory of the working class.[3]

However, the lesson of the Russian revolution could, in no way, be used to allow the pendulum to strike the other side. The rejection of the mechanical social democratic interpretation of class struggle should, in no way, lead to the advancing of an equally wrong principle, that the proletariat must capture power first in the industrially backward countries. The Russian revolution will not be described in history only as the first battle which the proletariat won. It will take its place in history as a special type of revolution which, though it opened the era of proletarian revolution for the whole world, was not by itself a classical proletarian revolution. It had to complete the tasks of the bourgeois revolution to pave the way for the emergence of socialism. The speciality of the Russian revolution lies in the fact that the economic development, which produces capitalism in other countries, appeared in Russia as an integrated part of socialist development. With the capture of political power the Russian proletariat did not inherit the achievements of the bourgeois society as the foundation for the construction of a new social order. The capture of political power gave the working class only the chance to use this basis as a precondition in the development of capitalism. The completion of the fundamental tasks of bourgeois revolution—destruction of pre-capitalist property relations and methods of production, introduction of the new means of production, centralization of modern economy, improvement of the standard of living of the masses, cultural advancement, elementary political education of the masses—were first undertaken under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The historical character of a revolution is determined by the class-content of the state, which it creates. The Russian revolution marks the beginning of the socialist ordering of the world, because it brought to power a class which, in its very nature, is opposed to private property and as such holds the banner of socialism.

The historic significance of the Russian revolution is even greater, as it started the process of socialist growth in a country where the necessary foundation for the future building was not yet laid. The comparative ease with which the proletariat captured power was offset by the difficulties which it encountered in the process of developing socialism. The bourgeoisie has been trampled, capitalism has ceased to be the dominant economic system, but the capitalist modes of production cannot be eliminated totally till the necessary economic conditions for the final development of capitalism are fulfilled. The capitalist mode of production leads, even under the dictatorship of the proletariat, inevitably to the growth of forces hostile to socialism. How to keep these forces in check while at the same time extracting the benefits of the capitalist mode of production for the revolution is, at present, the central problem of the Russian revolution. If the seizure of power by the proletariat had been a premature act, as not only the counter-revolutionary theoreticians but also some ultra-left demagogues hold, the Revolution could not have maintained itself in the face of such strong internal and external enemies. The launching of the proletarian revolution cannot but involve the use of force; it cannot rely on a peaceful transformation of the class-character of the country. But the fact is that the proletarian state in

Russia has anchored itself so securely that it cannot be actually overthrown from any side. It is a fact that the Russian revolution is a decisive turning point in history, which has heralded the development of a new social order on the ruins of capitalism.[4]

The capitalist world, amidst whose chaotic bustle the proletarian state stands as the brave pioneer of a new order of society, has, naturally, no love for it. It would have been most happy to annihilate the hated enemy. But it cannot give practical expression to this heartfelt wish. The antagonism between the capitalist states—which has become more intense in this period of general decline of capitalism—prevents any united action to destroy the workers' state. This demonstrates the strength of the latter and the instability of the capitalist world. On the other hand, the new capitalist forces which originate in this initial phase of socialist growth can be kept under control because they are only the by-products of a process which will ultimately lead to their complete destruction. The production of surplus value and its appropriation by the parasitic owners of the means of production form the basis of capitalism. The post-revolutionary class-struggle in Russia must be assessed from the standpoint of how far has this basis of capitalism been weakened under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In spite of the capitalist mode of production which is still in operation, Soviet economy is socialist because the surplus value for the accumulation of capital is used to help the proletarian state in the construction of a socialist order of society.[5]

Notes

[1] The relative importance of the 'subjective' factor and 'objective' factors in social revolution has been a major source of controversy among Marx's followers. The claim of Marxism to be regarded as 'scientific' is based largely on its analysis of 'objective' factors and its prediction that a system is inevitably destroyed by the very logic or dialectic of the objective factors. Thus Marx wrote in a celebrated passage in *Capital*: 'Centralization of the means of production, and socialization of labour, at last reach such a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. The integument is burst asunder. . . The expropriators are expropriated.' In the *Critique of Political Economy* he defined social revolution as 'transformation of the foundations of the juridical and political superstructure of society arising from change in economic foundations'. On the other hand, in *Civil War in France* he emphasized that 'the working classes have to pass through long struggles . . . .they have only to set at liberty the elements of the new society which have already been developed in the womb of the collapsing bourgeois society'. Nevertheless, he also cautioned that 'no social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed' (Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy*.) 'Communists form the most resolute and persistently progressive section of the working class parties . . . they have come to understand the determinants of the proletarian movement and how to foresee its course and its general results' (*Communist Manifesto*). The determinants and the course followed their own law which had to be understood and foreseen.

It was Lenin who gave much stress on the subjective factor, on the crucial role of the

'Vanguard' and the 'Party' in leading, hastening, and carrying through the revolution. This stress was severely criticized by the Social Democrats and various schools of Marxists in Europe who considered the Bolshevik model to be un-Marxian, retrogressive, and quite unsuitable to the objective conditions of industrially developed countries. If the victory of the communists in economically and politically backward Russia rather than in industrialized Germany demonstrated the unreliability of Marxist predictions—(in fact, no communist-led 'revolution' in the twentieth century, in China, Yugoslavia or Cuba, has confirmed the Marxian view that the most highly industrialized countries are the readiest for their integuments to burst asunder)—it also gave to the Leninist interpretation of Marxism the highest authority among the majority of the followers of Marx. Roy's break with the Comintern quite clearly did not at this stage mean rejection of the Bolshevik view of revolution.

For various interpretations and controversies among the Marxists on this question, Leopold Labedz (ed), *Revisionism*, London, 1962; George Lichtheim, *Marxism, An Historical and Critical Study*, London, 1968; Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth and Dissolution*, Oxford, 1978; J. Plamenatz, *German Marxism and Russian Communism*, London, 1954; C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists*, Penguin, 1975.

[2] The French Revolution of 1789–93 provided the model which was most frequently referred to by the Bolsheviks in their internal debates during the nineteen-twenties. The February Revolution of 1848 in France, the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III) in 1851, and the Paris Commune of 1871 were also historic events from which communists claimed to derive important theoretical and practical lessons.

The Cordeliers Club was founded by Danton and Marat in 1790; Robespierre belonged to the Jacobin Club. Jacques Hebert was a radical journalist who wrote passionately against the rich, and he and his followers converted many of the churches in Paris into Temples of Reason. In March 1794 he was arrested, condemned and executed by the Committee of Public Safety. Francois Noel 'Gracchus' Babeuf (1760–97) was a passionate exponent of communist egalitarianism; he edited the periodical *The Tribune of the People*, formed the society of the Pantheon, was accused during the Directory of plotting to overthrow the government, arrested (May 1796) and executed (1797). He became a legend thanks to the account left by his Italian disciple, Buonarroti, in his book *Conspiration pour l'Egalité*. David Thomson wrote a brief history of the uprising in *The Babeuf Plot*, London, 1947.

Louis August Blanqui (1805–81), a radical intellectual, was a member of the international conspiratorial organization, the Carbonari. He not only wrote extensively as a radical journalist but actively participated in a succession of uprisings and attempted seizures of power, and spent more than thirty years in prison. He advocated the dictatorship of the proletariat, but envisioned its establishment by a small and compact revolutionary group seizing power in the name of the proletariat. Critics of Lenin (like Rosa Luxemburg, Anton Pannekoek, etc) often accused Lenin of importing Blanquism into Marxism. Some of Blanqui's writings were gathered in a posthumously published volume under the title *Critique Sociale*.

Although the Paris Commune of 1871 was quickly overthrown, Marx acclaimed it in *The Civil War in France* as the first open and defiant manifestation in history of the fighting spirit of the proletariat. This view of Marx was quoted by Lenin when he supported the abortive Russian revolution of 1905.

Albert Fried and Ronald Sander, *Socialist Thought: A Documentary History*, New York, 1964, contains excerpts in English translation from the writings of Babeuf and Blanqui. Also see Hal Draper (ed), *Writings of Marx and Engels on the Paris Commune*, New York, 1972; V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. I, 1946, 'The Lessons of the Moscow Uprising'.

[3] In his historic April Theses 'On the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution' (*Pravda*, 7April 1917), Lenin declared that 'the first stage of the revolution which gave power to the bourgeoisie' was now over to give way to 'its second phase which should give the power in the hands of the proletariat'. His view was opposed not only by the Mensheviks

but also by the majority of his Bolshevik colleagues on the Petrograd Committee. However, at the All-Russian Party Conference at the end of April, Lenin got the support of an overwhelming majority, and the slogan 'all power to the Soviets' was adopted. Lenin proclaimed the Soviets to be 'a power *of the same type* as the Paris Commune of 1871; they were 'a foretaste of the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat'. E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol. I, Penguin, 1973, pp.88–97.

[4] Roy continued to assess and reassess the historic significance of the Russian revolution almost to the end of his life. In 1937, when he was still very much a Marxist, he published his book *The Russian Revolution: a Review and the Perspective* (Calcutta; 98 pp.) Ten years later he brought out his much bigger work *The Russian Revolution* (Calcutta, 631 pp.) incorporating the earlier book and his other major writings on this theme. In the latter work he tried 'to record history in the process of making'. It also bore witness to both continuity and change in his view of the developments in Stalin's Russia.

[5] In my photocopy of this article, some words and phrases in the concluding paragraph have become so indistinct as to be virtually indecipherable. The main point of the paragraph, however, is clear. Roy here maintained that instead of telling 'fairy tales' about 'the achieved wonders' in the Soviet Union, it would help 'the mobilization of the masses in the capitalist countries for the struggle for socialism' if 'the historic importance of the Russian revolution' and 'the enormous difficulties of the socialist reordering of society undertaken there' were truthfully explained. SNR.

Selections from *Gegen den Strom*

September–December
1929

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The first issue of *Gegen den Strom* (Against the Current) was published on 17 November 1928 from Breslau as the organ of the 'local Communist [Opposition] group'. From 1929 to 1933 it was published from Berlin. After the Nazis came to power in Germany it was moved to Paris/Strasbourg (1933–4), and from there to Copenhagen (1934–5). During 1928–30 it came out as a weekly, and in 1931–2 as a bi-weekly (there were 25 issues a year); thereafter less regularly and less frequently (1933: Nos. 1–9; 1934: Nos. 1–4; 1935: Nos. 1–5). Published only in German, it was edited by August Thalheimer, Heinrich Brandler, Jakob Walcher, Erich Hausen, and Paul Froelich. Later only Thalheimer, Brandler and 'Leo' were its editors. The last issue to be published was No. 5, 1935 (without date). From 1928 to 1934 it was produced in quarto size; this was reduced to octavo in 1935. Each issue consisted of between twelve and fifteen pages.

Gegen den Strom was the principal organ of the anti-Stalinist and non-Trotskyist Communist Opposition in Germany from 1929. Both *Volksrecht* and *Gegen den Strom* were specifically mentioned and condemned in the 'Open Letter from the ECCI Presidium to the KPD' (*Inprekorr*, 21 December 1928). After his formal break with the Comintern M. N. Roy contributed frequently to this journal. References to him in the Opposition press and attacks on him by the official Comintern press leave no doubt that he was a major figure in the new non-Trotskyist Opposition. His contributions to *Gegen den Strom* constitute one most important single primary source for any serious study of Roy's political views and reactions to contemporary developments after his expulsion. The series of his articles on the 'Crisis in the Comintern' certainly offers an extraordinarily comprehensive and illuminating contemporary critique of the organization and its policies. Curiously, no writer on Roy has so far made a scholarly study or use of this important source. Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller in their monumental tome, *Communism in India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960), a very substantial part of which is devoted to Roy, referred briefly once only to *Gegen den Strom* (on p. 142). J. P. Haithcox in his otherwise quite informative study, *Communism and Nationalism in India: M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy 1920–1937* (Princeton, 1971), casually mentioned *Gegen* twice (on pp. 133 and 179). But although some of Roy's *Gegen* contributions are, I understand, available in the University of California Library at Berkeley, none of those scholars showed even a nodding acquaintance with the contents of those articles. Other authors are equally innocent, irrespective of their admiration or hostility to

Roy. This is equally true of Tayab Shaikh (*M. N. Roy, the Man Who Looked Ahead*, Ahmedabad, 1938), Muzaffar Ahmad (*Myself and the Communist Party of India 1920–1929*, Calcutta, 1970), V. B. Karnik, (*M. N. Roy: Political Biography*, Bombay, 1978), A. Reznikov (*The Comintern and the East*, Moscow, 1978), or R. Ulyanovsky (ed. *The Comintern and the East*, 2 vols., Moscow 1978, 1979). Even R. J. Alexander, who wrote a full-length study of *The Right Opposition: The Lovestonites and the International Communist Opposition of the 1930's* (Greenwood Press, 1981) and devoted two chapters in it, one specifically, to 'The Brandler–Thalheimer Group in Germany' (chap. 8, pp. 135–55) and the other to 'M. N. Roy and the Indian Communist Opposition', (chap. 13, pp. 231–52) betrayed total unfamiliarity with the contents of *Gegen*. The fact that *Gegen* was published exclusively in German might have prevented its use by some of those writers. Since the collapse of the Right Opposition, copies of its publications have also been rather difficult to trace. Surprisingly, Roy himself left no indication in his later writings about the content of his contributions to the Brandler press.

In the course of my own researches it was my good fortune to come in contact with Mr Gerd Callesen of Arbejderbevaegelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv at Copenhagen. I learnt from him that his archive had acquired a complete set of *Gegen den Strom* (1928–35), and he very kindly provided me with a detailed and comprehensive Inhaltsverzeichnis (table of contents or index). I selected from this table all the articles published under M. N. Roy's signature plus a few unsigned contributions bearing on India and China. Mr Callesen generously gave me photocopies of all selected articles, as many as 49 items. If I were to include all of them in English translation, there would be place for little else in this volume. I had to be selective, but at least an untrodden area has now been opened, and a body of previously almost inaccessible primary source-material made available for the first time in English translation.

A few words about the two founder-editors of *Gegen den Strom* and the Right Opposition. In his *Memoirs* Roy recorded that his 'relation with August Thalheimer, from the very beginning, was of personal friendship . . . [He] was the first German Communist leader I met soon after my arrival in Berlin'. That was early in 1920 before Roy went to Moscow. Roy also described his first meeting shortly thereafter with Heinrich Brandler—the latter's 'massive head with a broad strong face on a short but powerful torso which carried a pronounced hunch on the back', and his 'deep guttural voice' reminded him of 'an angry bulldog'. It took some time before they came to like each other, but Brandler 'proved to be the most loyal and warm-hearted friend' (*M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, pp. 272–7).

August Thalheimer's father Moritz was a Jewish merchant, but the son had no taste for either religion or business. Born in Württemberg on 18 March 1884, August at first studied medicine at Munich University (1902–3), then transferred to the Faculty of Arts (Modern Languages and Sociology), went on to Oxford and London (1903–4), then studied Sociology, Anthropology and Ethnography at Berlin University under Professor von Luschan (1905–6), and gained his doctorate at the University of Strassburg in 1907 with a thesis on 'Personal Pronouns and Possessives in the Languages of Micronesia'. Rejecting the lure of an academic career he became editor-in-chief of the SPD's radical newspaper *Freien Volkszeitung* in 1909. He was a member of the militant left wing of the SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) and became a close friend of Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Karl Liebknecht and others. At the outbreak of the war he joined the 'Gruppe Internationale'. In 1915–16 he was editor of the Left SPD organ *Volksfreund*. He was conscripted, sent to the front and wounded. He returned to Stuttgart in 1918 and was arrested shortly before the outbreak of the revolution. Freed by the revolution, he returned to Berlin where he became a member of the Central Committee of the Spartakusbund, and one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). After the murder of Rosa Luxemburg he was considered the principal theorist of the KPD, being editor of its organs *Internationale* and *Rote Fahne*. Up to 1923 he was, with Brandler, the acknowledged leader of the KPD, but after the collapse of the Communist uprising in Germany in October 1923 he and Brandler were blamed for it (although the uprising had been planned and forced upon them by the Comintern), and they were removed from leadership positions and called to Moscow.

From 1924 to 1928 Thalheimer was 'cominterned' at Moscow, where he worked at the Marx–Engels Institute and was a Professor at Sun Yat-sen University. His book *Einfuehrung in den dialektischen Materialismus* (Wien–Berlin, 1928) was written at this time as also the joint work with Abram Deborin: *Spinozas Stellung in der Vorgeschichte des dialektischen Materialismus* (Spinoza's Place in the pre-history of Dialectical Materialism). When his wife Claire fell seriously ill he was allowed to return to Germany in May 1928, but he had made a secret agreement with Bukharin that he would not return to the Soviet Union but try with Brandler to reorganize the KPD (which had already been brought under the virtual control of Stalin's appointees, Ernst Thaelmann and Heinz Neumann). With Brandler he now gathered such communists as were opposed to the extreme sectarian line adopted at the Sixth Congress. In January 1929 he was expelled from the Comintern and from the Communists Party of the Soviet Union (of which he had been a member since 1925).

He now organized and led with Brandler the Communist Opposition in Germany. After Hitler seized power, he escaped to France where Paris became the headquarters of the Opposition. After the fall of France he and his wife were interned in a concentration camp from where they managed to escape, but they were refused visa and asylum in the USA. They took refuge in Havana where Thalheimer, besides writing a number of political pamphlets, spent much of his time in the University Library, preparing material for a major linguistic study with Panini as its centre-piece. He also planned a comparative study of the Indian and Chinese civilizations, and wrote to his friend Roy and to Jawaharlal Nehru about it. After the war he was refused entry to West Germany, but he kept in touch with and provided political advice to the 'Gruppe Arbeiterpolitik' which claimed to be the successor to the German Communist Opposition. He wrote for them 'Briefen aus der Ferne' (Letters from Afar); he also wrote a critical brochure on the Potsdam agreement under the pen name 'Aldebaran', which was distributed by his followers in Germany. He died in Havana, caught in a maelstrom, on 19 September 1948.

My wife Gita and I met August Thalheimer's widow Claire many years after his death, and tape-recorded a five-hour interview with her in the course of which she not only told us much about her illustrious husband that we did not know, but also about Roy and other Comintern personalities (like Zinoviev, Radek, Bukharin, Ruth Fischer, Brandler, etc). I learnt from her that an incomplete manuscript on which Thalheimer was working at Havana was taken away from her by their daughter Sita who lived in Mexico, but it was neither deposited in the archives of any university library nor published. I also got in touch with Margret Kuhlman in Bremen who provided me with copies of reprints of some of Thalheimer's writings which she had been bringing out on behalf of the Arbeiter Politik group. In the new atmosphere of *perestroika*, *glasnost* and *novoye myshleniye*, I hope more will come to be known about this tragic figure, who was once considered rightly as a Marxist intellectual of the calibre of Bukharin, Trotsky, Abram Deborin, Georg Lukacs and Ernst Bloch.

Heinrich Brandler (1881–1967) was a total contrast but also a most obvious complement to Thalheimer. Born on 3 July 1881 in Warnsdorf, Bohemia, he lost his father (who was the founder of the local Builders' Workers' Union) when he was nine, and therefore had to look after himself from very early in life. He worked as a 'paver' and bricklayer, and at the age of sixteen was elected Secretary of the Builders' Workers' Union. After three years of travel and work in different parts of Europe, he came to Hamburg in 1901 where he joined the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). In 1904 he was ordered out of Hamburg and moved to Bremen. In 1909 he went to Switzerland where he combined his work as paver-bricklayer with that of organizing worker-education. In June 1914 he came to Chemnitz, but was expelled from the SPD for supporting Karl Liebknecht. During the war he built up in Chemnitz the strongest Spartakist group. He founded the journal *Kaempfer*, in 1921 was elected to the Central Committee of the KPD, became one of the Party Chairmen and took part in the 'March' Action. He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, but in November 1921 escaped to Russia. After the Rathenau amnesty he returned to Germany and took over the organizational leadership of the KPD. He advocated the policy of United Front with the Social Democrats, and in 1923 was briefly a member of the cabinet in the coalition government of Saxony. However, the failure of the October uprising was blamed on him, and with Thalheimer he was deposed from party leadership and ordered to Moscow. He was made a member of the Russian Communist Party and given work in the Supreme Economic Council.

However, even during the period when his principal rivals, Arkadi Maslow and Ruth Fischer, ran the KPD, they did not succeed in finalizing Brandler's expulsion from the German party. After the fall of Maslow–Fischer, the new Central Committee of the KPD decided in 1927 to call Brandler back to Germany, but he was not allowed to leave Moscow till 1928. Back in Berlin he, Thalheimer and their supporters were involved in a bitter fight with Ernst Thaelmann and his henchmen who had been installed in office as Stalin's instruments in Germany. Thaelmann was charged with financial irregularity for which he was removed by the Party Central Committee from the post of General Secretary, but Stalin intervened and the Comintern Presidium ordered the KPD Central Committee to restore Thaelmann to his post. In protest against this Brandler and Thalheimer called a meeting of their followers in the KPD on 10 November 1928 which became the founding Congress of the KPD (Opposition).

With Thalheimer, Brandler was the leader of the German Opposition throughout the thirties. In 1933 he also migrated to Paris, and after the fall of France he took refuge in Cuba. In 1949 he obtained permission to return to Germany. He was active in the Arbeiter Politik group, and from 1960 to 1967 he contributed regularly to the new *Arbeiter-Politik* published by M. Kuhlman from Bremen.

The German Communist Opposition did not wish to set up a rival party or a rival Comintern. The objective was to restore democracy in the KPD and the Comintern through criticism and mass pressure, and to influence the Comintern policy to be changed from the suicidal left sectarianism of the Sixth Congress to an anti-fascist united front. The Opposition had a relatively strong base in the trade unions. After the Nazis came to power, although the KPD tried to work underground, it was systematically and ruthlessly destroyed.

Communist Opposition groups, which opposed the Sixth Congress line but did not ally with the Trotskyists, had also formed in other countries besides Germany—in France, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Great Britain, India, the United States, Canada and Mexico. In March 1930 representatives of the Communist Party of Sweden, the KPO of Germany, the Communist Opposition of Czechoslovakia and M. N. Roy met in Berlin and decided to set up an information centre there. The bulletin *INKOPP*, already brought out by Roy and Thalheimer as editors, was adopted as the organ of the new centre. The first plenary conference of the International Communist Opposition was held in Berlin in December 1930 with representatives from the United States, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Norway. It adopted a platform which emphasized that the ICO was not and did not want to be a new Comintern; it stood on 'the basis of the fundamentals of Communism and the defence of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state'; and it would work for a united front of workers and for democratization of the Comintern. The ICO had its Second Congress in July 1932, and a special plenum in July 1933; but thereafter it began to disintegrate. There was an attempt in August 1933 to form an alliance between the Trotskyist and the non-Trotskyist opposition groups (Roy from jail supported the effort), but it failed. However, an International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity was formed in 1933 with its headquarters in London, and in 1938 some sections of the ICO agreed to collaborate with the London bureau. In April 1939 at a Conference in Paris the London bureau and the collaborating groups of the ICO merged to establish the International Revolutionary Marxist Centre. Shortly thereafter the Nazi occupation of France put an end to IRMC.

Jules Humbert-Droz, *Memoires de Lenine a Staline: Dix Ans au Service de l'Internationale Communiste*, Neuchatel, 1971; Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus*, Europaische Verlagsanstalt; Branko Lazitch and M. N. Drachkovitch, *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern*, Stanford, 1973; R. J. Alexander, *The Right Opposition*, 1981; Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, Harvard, 1948; Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, Ann Arbor, 1962; Jane Degras, *The Communist International Documents*, 3 vols., London, 1956–71.

Also personal interviews/correspondence with Louise Geissler, Claire Thalheimer, Rose Froelich, Ruth Fischer, Gerd Callesen and Margret Kuhlman. SNR.

The Crisis in the Communist International

I. The Question of Leadership*

In spite of official optimism it is a deplorable, unpleasant and disquieting fact that *the influence of the Communist Party is regressing in every capitalist country*, that the proletarian masses are not won over to Communism. In the eyes of the current leadership the detection of this fact means it is 'rightist deviation', which reveals a lack of faith in the Revolution. The mere pointing out of this fact suffices one to be branded a 'renegade'. However, first of all it is urgently necessary that we undertake a thorough self-examination to find out the causes of this standstill situation, or rather this regression in the development of the Communist Party.[1] These causes must be pointed out and eradicated; that is the fundamental precondition for the success of the revolutionary proletarian movement. The decline in the influence of the communist parties in capitalist countries, *the communist party's inability to secure the support of the proletarian masses*, etc. are all the more deplorable, unpleasant and disquieting, because it is occurring not during a 'flat' period but during a period of general (albeit slow but sure) radicalization of the workers' movement. In other words, just when the objective conditions for the triumph of the Revolution are maturing, the subjective element fails by being unable to cope with the situation.

Let us remember the most blatant facts. In *Germany* three years ago, through the initiative of the Communist Party, over 14 million workers were mobilized on the issue of opposing compensation to the landowning classes. In the ensuing parliamentary elections the CP is unsuccessful in achieving the same number of votes as in 1924. During the armoured-cruiser campaign, which followed the elections, the party is unable to obtain the 1½ million votes necessary to obtain a referendum in this matter. And since then we notice a constant process of decline. The 'campaign leaders' during the lock-out in the Ruhr, for which there had been wide publicity, could influence the situation merely superficially. The 1st of May adventure was rapidly followed by the August fiasco. Later events were to reveal the illusory character of the 'victories' during the elections of the shop-committees. In a series of local elections—within the unions, the councils, the co-operatives—the communists suffered further defeats. The Communist Party does not succeed in organizing mass resistance, be it ever so small, against the brutal attacks on the unemployed. Nothing has been done to lead the dispute on the onus of reparations which is due to flare up in consequence of the Young-Plan. The membership itself has been greatly reduced because of the exclusion of its best elements on the one hand and the resignation on the other of the pessimistic and disgusted ones.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 39, pp. 7–8; No. 40, p. 9, written on 16 September 1929; and published under the signature of Manabendra Nath Roy in the issues of 28 September and 5 October 1929. Highlighting of sentences in the original German text has been retained in translation through italicization. SNR.

In *France*: The sudden reversal of electioneering tactics led to a defeat of the party during the national elections. Strikes in the metal and textile industries did not strengthen the influence of the party in these areas. A capitalist recovery and industrial expansion (both are to be seen as relative) are driving the French peasant-farmer to the brink of total or partial proletarianization. On the pretext of fighting the 'rightist danger', the party is completely isolating itself from the mass of impoverished peasants which form such an important political factor in France.

In *England:* The picture is more depressing than anywhere else. Even under conditions of a continuous industrial ruin and the decline of capitalism, of furious attacks on the working-classes and the most shameless deception by reformist leaders, the Communist Party is unable to register any increase in numbers. After the general strike of 1926 and during the ensuing months-long lock-outs in the mines, the membership of the CP approached some 10,000 in number. Since then it has decreased to a little over 3,000. The results of the last national elections revealed how far away the CP is from exercising a lasting influence on the labour movement.

In *Czechoslovakia*: Where the CP used to be the strongest workers' party, the fiasco of the 'red day' last year was a surprising revelation. The plan to organize a counter-demonstration on the anniversary of the Republic had to be abandoned as an impossible task. Yes, and even the plan to participate in the demonstrations as an independent proletarian group with its own revolutionary slogans failed because only a couple of hundred workers followed the Party's call. The tragedies of 1 May and 1 August were also re-enacted in Czechoslovakia. The decline in the number of members in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is truly shattering. According to reports at the 6th World Congress the CP then had a membership of 150,000. At the 10th Plenum Piatnitski reported that this figure had declined to 81,432; i.e. that the membership decreased by almost half in the course of one year! Indeed, the situation is even worse; in reality the members in the party number no more than 30,000. If the parties are incapable of holding their membership, how much less can they influence the working-class as a whole.

The decline in *China* is catastrophic. The heavy defeat in 1927 practically had the effect of eliminating the party as an effective factor in the political life of the country. The extent of the recession became obvious in the current conflict over the Manchurian railway. The Communist Party, which dominated the situation during the revolutionary years of 1925 to 1927, is incapable of organizing any mass-resistance against the anti-Russian acts which the nationalist bourgeoisie, as an immediate instrument of imperialism, is carrying out. Surely it is not a very laudable testimony for a party which 2 years ago was still the acknowledged leader of 2½ million organized workers and nearly 9 million organized peasants! The party and the red unions have lost their influence over the proletarian masses so completely that the Communist International is proposing that in future the communists should work illegally (underground) in the reformist unions that have been instituted after the defeat of the revolution by the bourgeois counter-revolutionary leadership. the whole class composition of the party has changed. Whilst in the summer of 1927 over 60% of the members were workers from the large industrial centres, the ratio is currently at most 5% (Tsiu Chu-pao, *International Press Correspondence*, No. 57, 2 July 1929). It is almost incredible. If, however, we take into consideration the source from which this information originates, we have to assume that the situation has been assessed rather too optimistically than that it represented an underestimation.

All other parties show the same picture, more or less. It is difficult to establish the actual position of the illegal parties. Here the situation must be still worse.

In contrast, the social-democratic parties registered a growing influence during the past years, i.e. just at a time when the reformist leaders act openly as agents of the bourgeoisie. How can that be explained? The failure to discover the reasons for this abnormal situation must either lead to a lack of faith in the Revolution or the desperate politics of a putchist sectarianism which means a departure from Marxism to Anarchism. The First International was dissolved because of the conflict between Marxism and Anarchism. We hear the echo of these conflicts in the Communist International today. The politics of the current leadership of the Communist International is an echo of Anarchism. It stands for the mistaken belief that the success of the Revolution does not depend on the will of the masses but on the determination of a small minority which is bound together by political backwardness and mechanical discipline. The regression of the Communist parties, of which some were leaders of the masses in their respective countries, to such putchist minorities is called 'bolshevization'.

Marxists cannot be representatives of the one or the other deviant type. On the one hand they can never lose faith in the Revolution, can never doubt that the masses will eventually follow the Communist Party, when the latter knows how to attract them; on the other hand they can never fall prey to despair and dream of a revolution without the support of the masses. It is the purest form of opportunism to speak of an 'offensive battle' if the masses, instead of following us, exhibit a tendency to distance themselves from us. Condemnation of this dangerous Don Quixotism is not in the least an indication of decline in revolutionary determination.

It does not mean that one 'resigns oneself to depression, pessimism, scepticism'. One cannot make an omelette without breaking an egg. 'Independent leadership' will not bring us closer to the revolution if the masses do not accept this leadership. The current policy leads to the creation of a pompous general staff without an army. It is high time for communists to realize that tough words do not suffice to unmask the reformists in front of the masses. We simply render ourselves ridiculous with the repeated assertion that the German Social-Democratic Party leaders have lost all influence over the masses, when the latter join the social-democrats by the tens of thousands or vote for them by the millions. It is a precondition for an effective revolutionary leadership to have the courage to face the facts, not to look for plausible explanations, but to establish their causes.

As Marxists we believe that capitalist exploitation will force the proletariat to the revolutionary fight for socialism. The proletariat must follow the party which does not only defend its class interests in principle but also knows how to lead them step by step, first towards and then in the revolutionary struggle itself. Not agreeing with the theory of a 'third phase', the absurd claim of an 'inactive vacillating stabilization', a Marxist observes that the post-war crisis of capitalism is a 'normal' periodic depression. It is a constant decline. Capitalism in general is on a downward road. That does not exclude a zigzag, and up and down, within the overall process. Consequently, the exploitation of the working class must be greater in the present period. *Therefore the objective situation is favourable for the Communist International to extend its influence over the masses and to mobilize them for the revolutionary struggle which will liberate society from the chaos of capitalist decadence. If the influence of the communist parties decreases instead of* *increasing in such a situation, then we must realize that something is wrong in our approach to the masses*. Else we might be suspected of doubting the infallibility of the Marxist principle of class struggle. *If we do not acknowledge that the parties commit errors, then we have to bury our faith in the proletariat as the gravedigger of capitalism*. A Marxist would not be in doubt here, he would attempt to discover the shortcomings of the subjective factor. He puts the actions of the party, the competence of its leadership to a merciless investigation. Such an investigation causes us today to pose the question about the leadership of the International. There are no objective reasons for the undeniable weakness of the communist parties. (It can only be denied by those who, at the moment when the movement overcomes the crisis, will be removed from position and power.) *The cause then is a dificient leadership. The current leadership of the Communist International is weak, incompetent and has no authority*.

One of the many things which differentiate the Communist International from the former International is its composition. Its leading section is a party which has led the proletariat through the first stages of the revolution; it is a party of the dictatorship of the proletariat which is presently in power; it is a party currently occupied with the task of establishing socialism. The other sections are still acting under pre-revolutionary conditions. Apparently the two wings—if one wishes to call them that—of the International, are unable to make use of a unified policy, unified tactics or organizational methods. However, due to the logic of facts, *the* party which carried through and accomplished the revolution from its beginnings dominates the International. Indeed, the Communist International was created by the Russian Revolution. The existence of a proletarian state was a tremendous impulse for organizing the revolutionary proletarian vanguard into a mighty international party. On the strength of this factor, the Russian Party not only played the dominant role in the International but practically monopolized its leadership. As long as the International was in its infancy, this was not detrimental, as long as the other sections were more or less immature, consisting of advanced, revolutionary, proletarian elements that strove towards communism but without a solid communist education or conviction. On the other hand, the leadership of the Russian Party was embodied in Lenin, who was international because of his character, experience and knowledge. Lenin and his closer associates lived abroad (in foreign countries) for years, they participated actively in the revolutionary proletarian movements in other countries, they were almost as familiar with the peculiar problems of other European countries as they were with the peculiarities of the Russian position. They were therefore more international as Russian leaders.

Gradually the situation changed. After Lenin's death the Russian Party continued to rule the International rather by tradition and because of the fact that it was the only party in power than by its own merits. Other parties had developed since. Conditions arose which made for a widening of the basic structure of the international leadership. As in the case of Lenin and his collaborators in Russia, so the best products of the revolutionary proletarian movements in other countries gathered together under the banner of the Communist International. New leading forces arose from the revolutionary impetus which followed the war. In due course it became obvious that the revolutionary movement could not be free of its internal contradictions. The factors which initially gave such a mighty impulse to the crystallization of the revolutionary proletarian vanguard into an international party, began to hamper the further growth of the International. The authority of the Russian Party discouraged subconsciously, or even consciously, the free intellectual growth of other Parties which remained at the infancy phase. The situation worsened further with the removal of most of Lenin's associates with international knowledge and experience from the leadership of the Russian Party. Their removal was essentially caused by their incompetence in solving the post-revolutionary problems as ably as they had solved the pre-revolutionary ones. From the point of view of the Russian situation their removal was probably necessary and advantageous. But it had an unfavourable influence on the leadership of the International. The people who replaced the so-called old guard in the leadership of the Russian Party represented perhaps a change for the better in so far as the internal Russian problems were concerned. But as leaders of the International they were no improvement. They were not equipped for the task. Most of them lacked sufficient knowledge of the global situation and personal experience of the labour movement in other countries. Many of them were not the organizers of the Russian Revolution but its product. Nevertheless they inherited by default the leadership of the International, and under the given conditions they were bound to monopolize it. Their shortcomings for this second role were not only determined by the lack of appropriate equipment but also by the demands of their main role, namely, that of the leadership of the Russian Party. In the course of time the post-revolutionary tasks have become increasingly gigantic in Russia so that the depleted leadership of the Russian Party can spend very little time on the tasks of the International. Consequently the monopoly lost all its advantages. It did not result in devoting the best forces of the Russsian Party to the leadership of the international movement. It was maintained mechanically as a tradition by the activities of a mighty bureaucratic apparatus. What the Russian Party really provided latterly for the leadership of the international movement were very low-ranking types among its members; those who could be of little value to its post-revolutionary tasks.

The Russian leaders could not completely ignore the inadequate and subnormal composition of the leadership of the International. Since the 14th Congress of the Russian Party in 1926 the need to strengthen the leadership of the International by recruiting non-Russian members to it has been mentioned frequently. But it has merely remained a desirability. In reality it has been the practice during the last two years to empty the International by indiscriminate expulsion of its best men from the international revolutionary proletarian movement who possess Marxist schooling, knowledge of the world situation and practical experience, necessary (attributes) in resolving the problems of leadership. The Russian monopoly has remained untouched, but the International has been robbed of its experienced, capable and representative leadership so indispensable in mobilizing the masses in the revolutionary struggle for which the objective conditions are growing to maturity daily. The development of the communist parties as well as that of the revolutionary leadership of the masses depends on resolving the matter of the international leadership. *The solution of this problem is the true internationalization of the leadership of the International.* It does not mean at all the removal of the Russian Party from its position of honour. *But this solution will never come from above.* Even with the best of intentions the Russian leaders are unable to solve the problem. They are hampered by the difficulties within their own party which often force them to use the International as a mere instrument in their internal party struggles. The unavoidable difficulties which arise out of the post-revolutionary tasks hinder the free development of parties which are yet far from reaching these same tasks. The leadership of parties which has to carry out the pre-revolutionary tasks must not be impeded by such difficulties. *To this end the leadership of the International must rise above the Russian monopoly. Let us grant to the only Party which has already accomplished the Revolution the place of honour and due precedence. But the means to that end is the development of independent leading men in the different sections of the International. And as this is a necessary condition for the success of the Revolution, it is certain that the opposition of the official apparatus against this necessity will collapse.*

16 September 1929.

II. The Russian Problem*

Being occupied with the exceedingly difficult task of establishing socialism in an industrially backward country whose economic structure, moreover, had been disrupted by imperialist and civil war, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union cannot avoid internal conflicts. These are fundamentally the reflexes of the post-revolutionary class struggle which characterizes the situation in which the Russian Party finds itself. The other sections of the Comintern cannot stand by this inner conflict of the Russian Party with indifference. On the other hand they have no practical influence on the struggle within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is a member of the Communist International, yet it does not submit in practice to its leadership. The Russian problem is never discussed or determined openly and objectively. The Executive Committee of the Comintern and its sections merely confirm *post factum* this or that policy of the Russian Party—supporting the official majority against opposition factions or deviating trends.[2]

This relationship between the International and its Russian section, which shows no strict adherence to the centralist principle, is determined by circumstances. Under given conditions a subordination of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to an international leadership can be no more than a formality. Notwithstanding this the presently existing state of affairs could be considerably improved. The internal matters of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union could be discussed more freely and more thoroughly by the Comintern. Loyalty towards the Russian Revolution, readiness to stand by the first proletarian State does not have to be necessarily identical with a mechanical, unintelligent and not infrequently forced confirmation of every action of the official majority. But at present the international leadership can only offer criticism, stimuli and advice. That applies not only to the complex problems of economic reconstruction, the administration of the State and the relations to the capitalist world, but also to internal Party matters; for these arise out of the differences of opinions concerning the methods for accomplishing the post-revolutionary class struggle in the given extraordinarily difficult situation.

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Other sections of the International can practically interfere neither in the internal nor in the external activity of the Russian Party because they are not competent enough to do so. They lack exact knowledge of the details of the situation which is absolutely necessary to carry out such a function. Being principally occupied with the tasks of preparing the Revolution, they neither have sufficient time nor the required opportunity to acquire such competence in order to participate effectively in decisions of matters which are related to the practical administration of the proletarian State. The acquisition of the necessary ability is the more difficult as the conditions under which the Russian Party undertakes the dictatorship of the Proletariat and carries out the socialist reconstruction are so totally different from those in the highly developed capitalist countries. The international character of the Soviet Republic will not depend on the actual administration by the revolutionary proletarian World Party (i.e. the Comintern) but on its own social basis, on the fact that the Soviet Republic represents the first successful battle of the working class and the possibility of the beginning of the socialistic construction of society.

If the other sections of the International are not suited to participate practically in the leadership of the affairs of the Soviet Republic, then the Russian Party can no longer monopolize the leadership of the International. Today's Russian Party is principally a creation of the Revolution, experienced in the post-revolutionary class struggle, a struggle which is conducted with the aid of the state's might. Therefore, it approaches all problems of the international class struggle inevitably from the point of view of the Russian experience and practice, although none of these are appropriate to the conditions of other countries except for the fundamental principles.[3] Consequently, the current Russian leaders urge fallacious views on the International which concern not only the tactics of organizing the Revolution but even the post-revolutionary reconstruction.

Without minimizing in the least the brilliant achievements of the Bolshevik Party, we must not lose sight of the fact that the success of the Russian Revolution is to be attributed to the combination of a series of favourable factors. The bourgeoisie was weak; the state machinery had completely collapsed; the catastrophic collapse at the front had demoralized the ruling class; the total disintegration and demoralization of the army and navy placed considerable armed forces at the disposal of the Revolution; and, finally, foreign capitalist powers were not able to intervene immediately and effectively. If it had not been for an experienced, clear-sighted, determined and ably led Party coming on the scene, the proletariat could not have succeeded in gaining power in spite of such a favourable coincidence of objective conditions. It is, however, just as doubtful whether the Bolsheviki would have been able to gain power without these favourable objective conditions. The present leadership underrate the coincidence of circumstances as a requisite pre-condition for the success of the Revolution. They only remember how the Bolsheviki managed to win power, but forget the conditions which helped to bring those actions to fruition. This erroneous insight into history on the part of the current leadership of the Comintern can be traced to the fact that the Russian Party is dominant in it, a party which is very different now from the former Bolshevik Party in its composition as well as in respect of its experience and outlook.

A further error is committed in the matter of union tactics. To be precise, no unions existed in Tzarist Russia. Illegal or semi-legal workers' organizations occupied themselves rather with political matters than with those of purely trade union concern. Under the then prevailing circumstances they could not act otherwise without degenerating into a legalistic 'economism' which was preached in those days by the then youthful Communist Martinoff.[4] The situation was such that even the minutest matters of wages or working conditions were closely linked with the burning political questions of the day. The importance of the role of trade unions in the conditions prevailing in bourgeois-democratic countries was only understood by those of the Russian Bolshevik leaders who lived under these conditions and gathered their experiences from the developing movement. Since the exclusion of these old experienced leaders either through death or by removal from the directorate, the views of the Russian party on trade union matters have become confused because of the difference in character and function of trade unions in bourgeois-democratic countries from those of the Soviet Republic. This resulted in the theory that trade unions would gradually become a part of the capitalist state government machinery. It is overlooked that the function of trade unions under capitalism is completely different from that operating under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Trade unions which are organs of the elementary form of class struggle cannot form a part of a government machinery as long as the social character of the state remains a bourgeois one. Finally, the lack of personal experience and faulty knowledge of conditions in advanced capitalist countries has led the new Russian leaders to pose the theory that the new economic policy with its specifically Russian form is a necessary phase of socialist reconstruction—that it must be applied in every country. (That the general basic traits of NEP may be appropriate to a few countries outside the Soviet Union is quite probable.)

These same men who are responsible for urging on the International such false views, pursue a line which is generally correct as far as Russian affairs are concerned. The methods by which the current leadership of the Russian party—with exceptions—asserts, invents or really proceeds, the methods by which it fights any opposition, suppresses any expression of an independent opinion, cannot always be justified. Every intelligent revolutionary must regret the fact that the leadership of the Russian Party or the Comintern has been so dangerously weakened through expulsion or suppression of men who cannot easily be spared either by the Party or by the Comintern. One may even ask why the Revolution has been robbed of the extraordinary talent and ability of a Trotsky after the excellent service he gave it under the leadership of Lenin. It is absurd to believe that any serious minded person would find Miliukov's deviations in Bukharin whose Marxist scholarship is undisputed and who has been the acknowledged theoretical authority of the Comintern since Lenin's death.[5] Nonetheless, the absolute necessity to save the International from the present crisis makes it obligatory on every Communist, regardless of appearances, to comprehend the central issue of the situation. Merely by its existence the Russian Party will remain the determining factor in the Comintern until the Revolution is successful in other countries. Therefore a sensible, objective, clear and unprejudiced examination of the Russian problem is absolutely necessary for the further development of the Comintern. Such an examination will to a large extent normalize the relations of the International to its Russian section.

The current diverging views prevalent in the Russian Party have very deep roots in the conditions of the country. In comparison to present disputes all former discussions, which heavily exhausted the leading cadre of the Party, were based on superficial and artificially created arguments. Since Lenin's death all Party discussions had this trait. At the background of all these discussions was the struggle for leadership: who shall fill the place of the great dead man? That was the central question which secretly dominated the situation. After the collapse of the 'block without principles' of the Trotsky–Zinoviev–Opposition, the matter of leadership was settled. Stalin became the man. After the Party had overcome the internal violent commotion, it turned its attention to the realities of the situation which were no longer interpreted for the purpose of disproving the views of the Opposition. It became clear that the views of the Opposition had been partly correct. The truth was that the New Economic Policy, whilst laying a few foundation stones for the future socialist economy, at the same time favoured the growth of the seeds of a new capitalism. The position which the proletariat had won in the lesser industrial sector of the national economy was threatened with being evened out by the strengthening of capitalism in the larger agricultural sector. The result of this imbalance was felt immediately. The peasantry, aware of its power, demanded ever more privileges not only in economic but also in political areas. As their demands were crossed by the measures taken by the dictatorship of the proletariat, the peasants attempted to restrict the economic life of the country. The so-called sale-strike commenced. Towns suffered constant food shortages and the foreign trade balance was disrupted by the dangerous decline of exportable goods. This heightened post-revolutionary class struggle found its expression within the Communist Party of Russia in the divergence of views on industrialization and the 'Five-Year Plan'. As the matter in question concerns the future of the Revolution, it is of considerable significance for the whole of the International. Can the Russian Revolution develop into a socialist Revolution, or will it succumb to the difficulties, national and international ones, and change into a bourgeois–democratic Revolution?

The other sections (parties) of the Comintern cannot remain indifferent towards this important question. Unfortunately, however, they are very badly or wrongly informed about the true differences of opinion within the Russian Party. The existence of a proletarian State represents a great victory in the international struggle against capitalism, a victory which must be maintained at any price. In view of the fact that the execution of the new economic policy caused an alarming growth of new capitalist elements, any further economic development in the Soviet Union must mean an attack against these elements. Otherwise it will not only endanger the basis of the socialist economy created in the course of the new economic policy, but even the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The crisis in the Soviet economy during the past year—a crisis evidenced by continuous food shortages in the urban areas—is the offensive of the new elements of capitalism in agriculture against the proletarian dictatorship. The way out of this crisis lies neither in a return to wartime communism nor in an unrestricted continuation of the new economic policy. The new economic policy in its previous form has fulfilled its purpose by giving the proletariat a breathing space to establish firmly its dictatorship and by rebuilding the ruined industry as a fundamental prerequisite for the socialist economy. We now need a farsighted policy which means in no way the abolition of the new economic policy in its main feature but a significant change in its shape, means and extent. The problem must be dealt with radically. A free circulation of agricultural products depends of the supply to the peasantry of sufficient ready-made goods for which the demand is constantly growing. If finished products are not produced in ever-greater quantities within the country, a free circulation of agricultural products will depend on imports from abroad. Because of that the economic life of the proletarian State will be continuously insecure—always threatened on the one hand by the new forces of capitalism in the land and on the other by foreign imperialist powers. The future development of the Soviet economy, therefore, has to embark on a bold course to free itself from this insecure situation. This could be alleviated partly by directing a large share of the newly accumulated capital to the production of consumer goods. That would not be, however, a radical solution of the problem. For the improvement in the production process is the prerequisite for a continuing increase in consumer goods production. On the other hand the position will always be threatened by the new elements of capitalism in the agrarian sector as long as the latter has not been subordinated to the process of collectivization. Thus the Soviet economy ought to develop along two parallel lines: preference to the production of the means for productivity and the creation of a basis of socialist productivity in agriculture.

It would be desirable to increase the production of finished products together with the means of production; or else one may be faced in one or two years time with a very difficult situation before the new policy shows useful results. Yet the plan has to be restricted to available sources of capital. Once the prospect of any large foreign credit has been eliminated, the possibilities of accumulating capital within the land are limited. These are far from being sufficient for either purpose. Therefore, one has to be given priority. Any stopgap measure can only mean a serious delay in the establishment of socialism. In the meantime the forces which are active against the socialist reconstruction would grow mightily and switch shortly to an intensified offensive. Indeed, the capitalist element in agriculture has already touched the proletarian dictatorship during the last years. The rich peasants have demanded, besides the concessions of local free trade, political rights. The weakening of the proletarian elements in the village soviets was not an isolated case but a symptom of the general situation. Intensified class struggle is thus the main feature of the situation; the capitalist elements are on the offensive in order to deliver a blow to the dictatorship of the proletariat before it can find a solid economic basis for its political power. A policy of concessions to the non-proletarian elements during this crisis signifies the admission that the social character of the State must be altered, that the Revolution must change into a bourgeois-democratic Revolution.

The otherr sections of the Comintern are very poorly informed about the dissent within the Russian Party concerning all of these basic problems of the post-revolutionary class struggle. It was demanded of them and they have obediently condemned the 'rightist danger' within the Russian Party. But they have never had the opportunity to acquaint themselves accurately with the views which were advocated by such important and once so leading personalities as Bukharin, Rykov, Tomski etc.[6] Their views are only known to them in the form as interpreted and condemned by the official majority. Not a few of us know through bitter practical experience that such interpretations are, as a rule, crass falsifications of controversial views. In the given circumstances the other sections of the International can only define their attitude in principle—towards the basic problems of the post-revolutionary class struggle, independently of the continuously raging struggle of factions within the Russian Party—ever desirous that free information and sufficient material were available to enable them to assist the Russian comrades with carefully thought-out, intelligent advice which they surely need in the currently difficult situation.

Agreeing in principle with the Five-Year Plan and knowing that its execution demands firm determination, one should nevertheless not underestimate the difficulties which stand in its way. For instance, the danger exists of a severe financial crisis which could arise out of the attempt to quickly establish collective agriculture. Until now a large part of the state's finances originated from the peasantry, i.e. accumulation of funds occurred to a large extent in the agricultural sector of the economy. Now the process will be reversed. A very considerable amount of the new capital will have to be invested in agriculture if the planned huge agricultural collectives are intended to be successful in a very short time. In all probability this will disrupt the whole organization of the State's finances and consequently the total national economy, which, of course, largely depends on the former. As such clearly recognizable difficulties cannot be overlooked by the official majority, there is sufficient reason to doubt that the plan will indeed be carried out unchanged. This doubt is further reinforced if we call to mind the theory and practice of the official majority in relation to the Trotsky–Zinoviev–Opposition. The views for which Trotsky. Zinoviev and others fought and were excluded by the leadership of the Party have contributed considerably to the current official line. There are grounds for assuming that what happened in the past may happen in the future. Therefore the sections of the International must differentiate between the Russian problem as such and the struggle for leadership of the Russian Party. The International as a whole should not bear the mark of the latter. The leadership of the individual section should not be judged according to its adherence to the one or other of the factions within the Russian Party, but primarily according to its ability to organize the masses for the revolutionary struggle in the capitalist countries. Those communists who act correctly in (matters concerning) Germany, France or England, will surely assume a correct stance towards the Russian problem provided that they have correct and sufficient information on it.

At this critical moment the Russian Party must not only proceed ruthlessly against the other classes with its dictatorship of the proletariat, but must also close its ranks firmly as a fundamental condition for delivering the final blow against the enemy. This necessity which arises out of the situation strengthens the power of the Party bureaucracy which is gripped by panic either in view of the imminent difficulties or by the insecurity of its own position. Under the pretext of closing the ranks of the Party all political life is ruthlessly suffocated and the Party is turned into a giant machine. During this extremely critical moment when every single member must give his best so that the Party can carry out its task in spite of what seem to be almost insurmountable difficulties, the party machine suppresses even the minutest manifestations of growing new forces which may replace the lifeblood spilled in tragic factional conflicts.

This abnormal state of affairs within the Russian Party is reflected in the International. In its struggle against the Opposition the current leadership of the Russian Party demands unconditional approval from the International. It would probably obtain such approval on the basis of the factual situation if free and open debate of the different views were permitted. Instead it proceeds with this crazy and suicidal policy to transform the International into an enormous apparatus which forbids even the slightest independent thinking on the pretext of fighting the 'rightist peril'. Obedient, unscrupulous, and politically backward people have been put in charge of the communist parties in capitalist countries, who are perhaps reliable weapons in the struggle within the Russian Party but who probably cannot contribute to the solution of the Russian problem.[7] Because the Russian problem will not be resolved until the Revolution has been victorious in other countries, and the Revolution will be delayed as long as the Comintern has no sensible leadership.

6 October 1929.

III. The Problem of Organization*

Continuous tactical mistakes which result from a wrong evaluation of the situation have not only weakened the relation of the Communist Parties to the masses but have also driven them in an alarming way to inner disintegration. Instead of realizing this danger in order to overcome it by correcting the mistakes, the present leaders of the International pose new theories of communist tactics and strategy. The matter of organization is inseparable from the matter of leadership. Without a leadership which truly represents the international revolutionary proletarian movement, a mighty international organization can never be erected. The Communist Parties can only fulfil the role of revolutionary leaders of the whole of the working class, if they act according to the specific conditions of the various countries respectively. It does not mean a breaking of the centralization principle if the national sections of the International, when determining the tactical line, take into consideration specific local conditions. Indeed, only thus can they play a vital part in the political life of their areas of activity and form together a truly energetic and combat-ready world Party of the proletariat. Currently the contents of the principle wither under the tyranny of the name. A bureaucratic machine led by incapable but relentless hands is elevated to the position of the centralized revolutionary world Party although in reality it merely hinders at present the development of just such an organization whose ideological and political basis was created during the first years of existence of the Comintern and whose conditions and needs for growth are rapidly maturing in the whole world.

The 10th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern met to intone a hallelujah to the official policy.[8] Nevertheless, it highlighted in a tragic way how the International was being ruined by this policy. One needs to read only two speeches to realize the total implication of the tragedy. As the picture which Piatnitsky evoked of the internal situation of the Parties was absolutely disheartening, Manuilsky had to lighten the atmosphere by striking an optimistic note. It was a picture for gods with Manuilsky as the theoretician. He played the role almost as brilliantly as when he tells anecdotes. Only he did not say anything original. Bordiga is the father of the theory which he produced with his usual verve. However, the father would have defended his child in a more creditable manner than its stepfather. Formerly Bordiga represented the view in the Comintern that the Communist Party should be organized as a small, compact, resolute revolutionary minority which delivers the fatal blow to the capitalist state when the favourable moment has arrived.[9] Lenin fought this notion as 'ultraleft sectarianism'. Now Manuilsky smuggles in the same anti-Leninist principle on the organization of the Communist Parties in the name of Lenin. He quotes Lenin and that settles the matter.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 42, pp. 7–8, written on 12 October 1929 and published in the issue of 19 October 1929. SNR.

For years it was reiterated that the winning of the masses was the proclaimed immediate task of the Communist Party. At every Congress, every plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, theses were adopted, resolutions taken, where the main weight was given to this central point. In spite of this the masses of workers did not gather around the Communist Party with the exception of a few countries and even in these countries the influence of the communists over the masses has weakened noticeably. This incongruity between political influence and organizational consolidation was a confusing issue before the Comintern.

Now we notice even in the Parties alarming signs of disintegration. This emerged quite clearly in Piatnitsky's talk at the 10th Plenum. Unmistakably the resolution on the winning of the masses was carried out unsatisfactorily. Instead of acknowledging this mistake, the present leadership of the Comintern puts up the amazing theory that the view of gaining the majority of the masses as a precondition for winning power represents an opportunist deviation (Manuilsky's speech at the 10th Plenum). The masses do not come to us—therefore, let us make the revolution without the masses! This is the fundamental idea of the new theory of organization as it was put up at the 10th Plenum. Organized influence on the majority of the working class is no longer a principal condition for the Bolshevizing of the Communist Parties. The distinguishing mark of Bolshevization is 'to take up now the fight for the leadership of the working class'. While fighting the 'fetishist attitude of the right-wing opportunist elements on the question of gaining the majority of the working class,' Manuilsky expounded the following view at the 10th Plenum:

> A relatively small Communist Party which lets itself be intimidated by the number of social-democratic voices and which resigns from taking up right now the fight for the leadership of the labour movement, shows that it does not believe that it, *and only it*, is the *sole* workers' party.

That the Communist Party is the sole party of the proletariat, that the aim of all of its immediate activity is the conquest of the leadership of the working class, that the Party as a part—the most advanced—of the class cannot comprise the whole class in its rank, that leadership of the proletariat does not mean organizing the whole class in the party, that a hundred per cent organization of the workers, union-wise and political, is not the principal condition for the gaining of power—all these are the fundamental principles of Bolshevism which every communist must know. Yet the problem is not the battle for leadership of the working class but the battle of the leadership of the working class for the conquest of power. Already by virtue of its formation the Communist Party has taken up the fight for the leadership of the working class; else it had no right of existence. If the 10th Plenum posed such high-sounding theories in order to prove that the Communist Party had a right to exist, then it did so ten years too late, and it simply declined into banalities. What Manuilsky meant is obviously that the Communist Parties of every country must now make a move to lead the working class towards the conquest of power, even if they are small in number, even if the overwhelming majority of the working class still follows the Social-democrats. And that is clearly putschism.

Of course, the cult of putschism was not openly preached. Manuilsky did not assert 'that the communists are obliged to include the majority of the working class organizationally' (probably he meant: in its ranks), but they should influence them by way of 'conveyor belts—unions, shop stewards, strike leaders and the various action-committees'. But in the same breath he declared that the 'formal' results of Parliamentary, Council, Shop Steward, Union and other elections were not the measuring-stick by which communist influence on the working class should be judged. 'We possess other criteria for defining the gaining of the majority, namely the leadership of mass-struggle,' he said. That is a classical example of self-deception. How can the Communist Party indeed conduct (not in imagination) mass-struggles if it does not have at least some influence on the mass-organizations of the proletariat? And there must be a gauge to measure the extent of this influence. The communists have no faith in bourgeois democracy. Nevertheless they participate in every election which takes place under the bourgeois–democratic principle. Why? Because these elections give them an opportunity to carry out propaganda and agitation among the mass of people, and the results of the elections provide the measure for ascertaining the extent of the communist influence on the masses. If the Communist International accepts Manuilsky's theories, it must not only degenerate into anarchist anti-parliamentarianism, but it must also reject all activity within the reformist mass-organizations as 'rightist deviation'. In consequence, the Communist Parties will change to Bakuninist 'warring minorities' who agitate for a utopian 'cooperative social order'.

Let me affirm once more that the immediate main task of the Communist Parties is gaining the leadership of the working class to which they must aspire under all circumstances. How this task is to be achieved, however, depends necessarily on the circumstances under which this endeavour is carried out. The method for solving this problem has to be different in England, for instance,—where the Communist Party is not only insignificant numerically but receives only 50,000 votes in the parliamentary elections—in comparison to that pursued in Germany where 3½ million workers vote for the Party. The communists are able to gain the support of the majority of the working class by way of leadership of the mass-struggles, if these struggles are carried out under the conditions of a general revolutionary upsurge. That was the case in Russia in 1917. Under different conditions different methods have to be used for the same purpose. The Communists must gain the confidence of the masses by assiduous, untiring, skilful action which extends its [the Party's] influence over the masses by way of the 'conveyor belts'. The majority of the working class has to be gained in the form of organizations, although not within the Communist Party (which is impossible under capitalist conditions), but surely through the unions, factory shop-stewards, co-operatives and other kinds of mass organizations. Because experience has shown that occasional participation in mass-fights does not always lead to consolidation of communist influence. The Communist Party of England played a fairly leading role during the lock-out of the English mining industry in 1926; but today it has lost all organizational influence among the miners. Its members were thrown out of the miners' unions. The miners who joined the Party during the lock-out have left the Party again. Very few of them have even voted for the communist candidates in the parliamentary elections. Under these conditions the Communist Party of England commits a huge error if it endeavours to gain the support of the masses by way of the leadership of mass conflicts. Firstly, the objective conditions have not matured sufficiently for revolutionary mass-battles; and secondly, economic battles which encompass large masses of workers can never be brought under the leadership of communists if they approach the situation merely with abstract revolutionary slogans. And that does not merely apply to England today but also to some of the other countries. In spite of this the Communist parties are changed into a pompous general staff through pseudo-revolutionary theories (which ignore the realities of the situation) without being in command of the corresponding armies.

The proof of the organizational disintegration of the Communist Parties was provided by Piatnitsky who could not avoid reporting that the plan to organize the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries automatically along the pattern of the Russian Party had collapsed. That was to be expected: the structure of parties which have to mobilize the working class for the battle to gain power in the capitalist countries cannot be an exact replica of a party which already exercises such power in the state. The roots of the organizational problem have grown thus in the same soil which is also the basis of the problem of political leadership. The crisis in the Comintern is the result of ignoring the very important fact that under its banner class-struggles are carried out in two different historical contexts*—pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary. Parties which are active under such totally different conditions of the class-struggle cannot have the same structure.

According to Piatnitsky's report the membership of all Communist Parties has regressed during the past years. In order to minimize the seriousness of this revelation, Manuilsky as the main speaker put forward the theory that numerical smallness does not represent a hindrance for the Communist Party in its struggle to gain power. But the analysis by Piatnitsky of the internal composition of the Parties and the fluctuation of their membership is more informative insofar as it shows how the Parties continuously isolate themselves from the masses. There were figures which showed that in practically every Party the number of members organized in factory cells is decreasing, whilst the membership of street cells is increasing. Further, the number of factory cells itself decreased, in Germany, for instance, from 2243 in 1926 to 1556 last year (1928). During the same period the number of street cells grew from 110 to 2461. We discern the same picture in the Party organization of almost every country. What does this mean? It means that under capitalist conditions, especially when class struggles become more acute, the Party cannot be built exclusively on the basis of factory cells. Firstly, this atomizes the organizational system of the Party, breaking it into the smallest units and thus hindering the evolution of a collective party action because the factory cells normally work under semi-legal or completely illegal conditions. On the other hand, this splintering of the membership makes the responsibility of the leadership a formality by placing it outside any effective control which the membership could exercise. For a Party which exercises executive power in a state, a strong apparatus is necessary; but prior to gaining power the structure of the Party has to be flexible. Secondly, party members avoid being incorporated, as a rule, into factory cells because they are certain in that case to be dismissed from their job sooner or later. Thirdly, the

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*literal trans. would be: historical periods ('*geschichtlichen perioden*'). SNR.

constant danger of dismissal for every communist obliges the factory cells to operate almost illegally even if the Party itself has legal status. All these factors taken together constrain the Party internally and isolate it on the other hand from the people.

Of course Piatnitsky did not think of seeking the probable cause for this deplorable state of affairs in the principle of strongly building up the Parties on the basis of factory cells which does not suit the conditions in capitalist countries, or in the fact that the organizational disintegration is a consequence of this tactical error. In his opinion everything would be in order if the Parties had more faith in this principle, and he is content with asking the Parties to be diligent. The illness, however, cannot be cured so easily. The system itself must be changed. In the construction of the Parties as well as in conducting their political activity, consideration of the specific situation is preferable to the posing of dogmas and vapid revolutionary phrases.

The Parties ought to be organized in such a way that the leadership is constantly under the control of the membership which offers the guarantee that they follow tactical lines which bring them closer to the masses. Groups in mass-organizations, regularly called general meetings of the membership where all matters before the Party are discussed, and factory cells—they should be the three pillars of the Party-structure. Not only should the factory cells cease to be the sole principal unit of the Party-organization, but their formats must be changed too. As the factory cells cannot operate legally under the conditions of a heightened class struggle in capitalist countries, they should be changed into 'trusted agents-committees' [Vertrauenleute-Komitees] which operate within the mass-organizations besides carrying on the open activity of the Party. The present system of placing the chief stress on the factory cells which, in practice, have not proved to be very effective organs for bringing the Party in touch with the masses, has led to underestimation and neglect of the work of consolidating the position of the Party within the mass-organizations, primarily in the unions. Through the 'trusted' agents in the factories the Party can easily achieve what it has failed to do through the officially instituted factory cells, without its members losing their jobs, and without isolating itself from the workers in the factories as well as from the masses in the unions and others under reformist leadership.

However, the problem of organization will not be solved properly as long as the International is ruled by a leadership which does not learn anything from its experiences but which puts forward false theories in order to justify its mistakes. The Parties will strengthen their internal organization, and their general political influence on the masses will lead to consolidating their relationship to the whole of the working class, only if they are led with sufficient consideration to the specific needs of conditions under which they operate. Such a development of the sections of the International will neither be detrimental to the principle of nor the necessity for centralization. On the contrary, healthy national sections which are deeply rooted in the working class of their country are a principal condition for the development of a truly revolutionary world Party of the proletariat.

12 October 1929.

IV. The Problem of Centralization*

The supreme organ of the Communist International is the World Congress. The resolution of a World Congress is absolutely binding on all Parties and their individual members. In the period between two World Congresses, the highest authority of the International is the Executive Committee which is elected by the Congress. The elections are not conducted on the principle of sectional representation, but are decided by all delegates with voting powers attending the Congress. Therefore, the International Executive does not comprise of individual representatives of a number of Parties, but it represents the collective leadership of the International as a whole. This centralized structure of the Comintern corresponds with the Marxist notion of class-interest. The proletariat has no fatherland. The Party therefore must be international not only in principle but also in its real structure and activity; international discipline must be above national discipline.[10]

The rapid development of the Comintern during the initial years of its existence is largely due to its centralist structure. The internal conditions in the International have lately developed in such a way that it seems justified to question the fairness of the current form of centralism. *However, for communists of a firm Marxist conviction the principle of centralism is unassailable.* Nevertheless, as Marxists they cannot ignore the present position. *Today, the highest authority of the World Congress is mechanically maintained—the collective nature of the International leadership had become a mere formality. During the last years this false application of centralism has seriously hampered the development of the International.* It is a further sign of the crisis in the Comintern.

Today, centralism is hindering the development of the International because it has ceased to be *democratic.* The principle as such is not in question. It must be adhered to strictly, if the Comintern is to be the revolutionary World Party of the proletariat. The difficulties are the result of the wrong application, due to misunderstanding of the principle by the current leaders of the International. They do not comprehend that the method which had to be used during the founding of the International does not always remain suitable under all conditions. It was the World Congresses' task, during the first years of the Comintern, to formulate the fundamental principles of Communism—ideologically, politically, strategically and tactically. This task was accomplished by the first three World Congresses. The task then changed: it is now a matter of putting the principles into practice. During this last period the Congress ought to have been organized differently, their working methods should have been adapted to the nature of the task. This discrepancy between the nature of the task and the operational method turned the authority of the World Congresses gradually into a formal notion which is maintained automatically by a bureaucratic machinery. As the International developed from its elementary stage, and as Communist mass Parties were formed in countries outside Russia, the discrepancy grew accordingly. The apex of this development was reached at the 6th World Congress. Since then the crisis in the International has become obvious.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 44, pp. 7–8; written on 24 October 1929, and published in the issue of 2 November 1929. Highlighting of sentences in the original German text has been retained in the English translation through italicization. SNR.

The authority of the World Congress and the International Executive is nothing abstract. There is a tangible source for this authority, more tangible than the 'divine rights' of medieval monarchs or the 'democratic' might of modern bourgeois states. The authority is derived from the working class as a whole which proclaims its will through its most advanced section organized in revolutionary political parties in the different countries. It is an organic process. The Party grows out of that class as its revolutionary avant-garde, consciously expressing the aspirations of the whole class and actively representing its interests. This authority is not transferable as it is in the bourgeois–parliamentary democracy where the elected representatives become an agent of power independent of their voters and of the 'democracy'. Today, however, a strong element of bourgeois–parliamentary democracy has crept into the centralization-principle, and into the structure of the World Congresses and the Executive Committee of the Comintern. These highest organs of the CI no longer act as inseparable parts of the whole class. They do not conduct the revolutionary fight of the class with due consideration of circumstances under which this fight is taking place. Their authority is not based on the will and the aspirations of the whole class which are expressed in the considered opinions of the Parties, which latter are operating under conditions which differ greatly from one another in specific features. Therefore, the Comintern's organs are divorcing themselves from the class, just as the bourgeois parliament from its voters, and they exercise their authority via a mechanical organ of power—the bureaucratic apparatus of the International as well as of the national sections.

Under such conditions the World Congress is unable to carry out its functions correctly. It is now no longer the function of the World Congress to establish general principles of the proletarian world revolution, of the programme or the organization of the Party which it should lead. It is the task of the World Congress at the present stage of the International's development to determine from time to time, but always on the basis of the already formulated general principles in the light of the experiences gathered in actual combat and under the specific conditions of the combat, the strategic action and line of tactics. This task cannot be accomplished if by its detachment from the internal party-democracy the centralization principle is paralysed. At the present stage of the communist movement the World Congress has to take wrong resolutions if it is not organized in such a way that it represents one organ through which the well-considered opinion of the whole of the International is expressed. And the further development of the International must necessarily be as seriously hampered as long as all criticism of such mistaken resolutions are ruthlessly suppressed as a result of a false interpretation of the centralization principle.

Why did the crisis in the International come so sharply into focus since the 6th World Congress? During this one year almost all the leading sections of the International fell victim to forcible surgical operations under the pretext of purifying them from the 'peril of the right'. Under this pretext almost all the former battle-hardened, experienced, educated, independent elements have been excluded from the parties. The exclusions were carried out to such a large extent that in a number of countries—Germany, Czechoslovakia, America and Sweden—the parties were actually split into two parts.[11] In other countries the parties are disintegrating as a result of the catastrophically wrong tactics—e.g. China, France and England. Everywhere young, immature, inexperienced and often dubious elements appear at the head of parties. The crisis which had been developing for years burst out so violently because the resolutions of the 6th World Congress were so far removed from the realities of the situation and so little in accord with the needs of the movement that opposition to them within the party could not be suppressed any longer. *This opposition to the resolutions of a World Congress does not represent a negation of the centralization principle. On the contrary, it is the endeavour to halt the degeneration of this principle into one of formal bourgeois democracy.* If the 6th World Congress had been organized on the basis of the practical application of this principle of democratic centralism it would have been impossible that such fundamentally wrong resolutions would have been taken.

The main resolutions of the 6th World Congress referred to 1. the International situation and the task of the Communist Parties, 2. the danger of war, 3. union tactics and, 4. the colonial question. *The events following the 6th World Congress have repeatedly proved the* *inaccuracy of all its resolutions*. It can indeed not be otherwise; for a correct resolution on every one of these issues is absolutely dependent upon thorough discussion, which has to be conducted on the basis of the knowledge of facts and the experience gathered in the course of struggle. But a superficial discussion at the Congress, which occurs under the threat of being accused of some kind of deviation, does not satisfy this purpose at all. The discussion would have to take place over a particular period of time in the whole of the International. Each individual member ought to have the opportunity of participating in such a discussion and presenting his or her views freely and openly. Only after such a discussion would the delegates at a World Congress be fully able to collaborate actively in the formulation of strategic and tactical guidelines for the approaching struggle. Such a preparation would have saved the 6th Congress from an erroneous assessment of the international situation—an assessment which has determined all its tactical guidelines. In that case it would not have been necessary to maintain the authority of the World Congress by means of an arbitrary application of the centralization principle; for the authority would have been derived from a tangible source. Such centralism would have been democratic and it would therefore have contributed to the strengthening and further development of the revolutionary World Party of the proletariat.

The high command of an army must not direct all its strength in one straight line and use it in uniform actions. The front rather ought to be scouted carefully and the different parts of the army should be given various tasks determined by the position of the enemy whom they must fight in different areas. These general rules are applicable to military as well as political strategy. If the 6th World Congress had made its assessment of the international situation on the basis of an independently conducted examination by the respective parties active in all important countries, it would not have made the big mistake of ignoring one of the most characteristic laws [*gesetze*] of capitalism—[viz.] the law of unequal growth. The inability to acknowledge that capitalism could not only stabilize itself during this period of general decline but even experience a certain upward trend in some countries, has led the 6th Congress to establish the theory of an offensive along all fronts. More than a year has passed since the 6th World Congress. Those who did not agree to its resolutions have all been expelled from the Communist Parties; nevertheless, in practically all leading capitalist countries the proletariat has been exposed to a heightened capitalist offensive. Far from successfully attacking the bourgeoisie, the proletariat cannot even counter effectively the capitalist offensive. The social-democrat leaders either sabotage the resistance of the workers or openly support the bourgeoisie's offensive. In this situation the communists only render themselves inactive with their theory of an 'offensive on all fronts'. The close link between the catastrophic ultra-left union policy and the wrong evaluation of the international situation is made obvious here.

The resolution of the 6th World Congress about the war peril is equally wrong. War is a characteristic of capitalist society. The danger of war is still stronger during a period of capitalist decline. Yet the situation is wholly misjudged if the subjective factor is totally left out of consideration. A new world war will be the death-knell of the capitalist system. The bourgeoisie knows that; therefore it makes frenzied attempts to solve differences peacefully as far as possible. We all know that these endeavours will be futile; therefore we foresee the danger of a war. But the question is: how acute is the danger? A careful analysis of the forces struggling with one another shows that it is not sufficiently acute to warrant the hysterical campaign which has been conducted so unsuccessfully by the International since the 6th World Congress. The most revealing, in this context, is the conflict over the East-China Railway. The situation there indicates that the differences among the imperialist powers are so great that they could not even agree on actually proceeding with a war against their commonly hated enemy, namely the USSR.

The complete inability of the Communist Party of China to regain its positions of power by utilizing the heightened differences in the camp of the nationalist bourgeoisie indicates how deplorably mistaken the resolution of the 6th Congress was in regard to the colonial question. Further proof is the progress of events in India. The resolution of the 6th World Congress forced small groups of young communists, who are operating under conditions of cruel terror, to isolate themselves from the revolutionary nationalist movement.

The situation is indeed a tragic one. On the one hand all who disagreed with the resolutions of the 6th World Congress have been expelled from the International; and on the other hand the Parties are destroyed by being compelled by the official leadership to follow these resolutions. *The escape from this unhealthy state of affairs lies in re-establishing democratic centralism in place of the current arbitrariness of the central apparatus.* The further development of the International depends on re-establishing the authority of its highest organ. But the authority of the World Congress can only then be re-established when it is called together in order to give expression to the well-considered opinion of the whole International, in order to take resolutions on the basis of such a discussion. Expulsions and disciplinary actions must cease. All urgent questions of the day must be discussed frankly and openly by the members of all Parties. Delegations to the World Congress should comprise representatives of varying views, if they exist within the Parties. Following such a preparation the resolutions of an assembled World Congress will be binding for all members of the International, not by virtue of a mechanistic notion of discipline, but due to the justness of their contents and the right method of composition of the World Congress. They [the resolutions] will reflect the collective experience of the whole International. We shall never depart greatly from the revolutionary path indicated to us by Marx and Lenin, if we are led by the collective experience which the Communist Parties, as the most progressive section of the working class, as acting in closest contact with the whole class, are gaining. In other words, let the masses through membership of the Communist Parties contribute to the decisions on strategic and tactical guidelines for the battle against capitalism, instead of party-members being intimidated under threat of expulsion and being forced to vote in favour of all resolutions.

24 October 1929.

V. The Terror*

Bourgeois historians of the French Revolution posed the theory that 'the Revolution devours its own offspring'. The essence of this trite theory is that the dictatorship of the Jacobins was the more easily toppled because 'sansculottism' seriously weakened it through internal strife. While basing its hopes today on this theory, the bourgeoisie is looking with satisfaction on the effect of the terror-regime within the Communist Party of the USSR. It is hoping that this mighty enemy which, in spite of all its efforts, could not be destroyed, will finally fall victim to its own internal struggles—perhaps the Revolution will devour once more its own offspring.

The progress of events gives sufficient ground for the bourgeoisie's hopes. The terror-regime inside the Communist Party of the USSR has a destructive effect in an alarming manner. It is now almost certain that the so-called right Opposition, led by Bukharin, will soon be expelled from the Party. The judgement against Bukharin and his associates was announced some days ago by one of the most loyal assistants of Stalin, Kossior. At a conference of the Communist Party held in the Ukraine Kossior declared: 'No hope exists any longer of Bukharin's improvement. Therefore, at its plenary session next month the Central Committee will deal with him and his friends with truly bolshevik severity.' The crime for which Bukharin and his friends are to be condemned consists, as Kossior explained, in that the right Opposition '*openly criticizes our policies and our leadership!*' The expulsion of Bukharin and his allies will practically complete the annihilation of the bolshevik 'Old Guard'—the collaborators and personal pupils of Lenin. The last of the Mohicans—Stalin—stands alone, as Robespierre stood alone, and who can state with certainty that the same fate may not overtake him too? The inner terror really goes too far and endangers therefore the future of the Revolution.

One need not agree with the views attributed to Bukharin and his allies in order to protest against their expulsion from the Party. This protest can be raised on the ground that the proletarian Revolution need not ape the methods used by the bourgeois Revolution. Terrorist measures, including such as are used for outside and those applied internally, do not always reflect revolutionary determination. Frequently they are decided upon by those who are filled with panic and who possess little faith in the dynamic powers of the revolutionary class. The present disputes within the Communist Party of the USSR reflect the great difficulties which hamper the process of economic re-construction which is taking place under the complex conditions of the post-revolutionary class-struggle. They are differences of opinion on strategy and tactics in the struggle which the proletarian dictatorship has to carry out against all forces, old or new, which actively or passively resist the process of socialist re-construction. The liquidation of these differences of opinion by means of internal terror could easily be suicidal. Because they are chiefly disputes within the working classes which can be settled by virtue of the fundamental principles of the Revolution. Terror is a weapon of the revolution for destroying the enemy of one's class. Its use within the revolutionary class is very risky, and the danger can easily become fatal if the terror-regime reigns within the Party of the revolutionary class.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 46, pp. 14–16, written on 2 November and published on 16 November 1929. SNR.

Whatever the views may be which Bukharin and his allies represent, they are not the expression of false subjective inclinations. They mirror the reaction of a section of the proletariat to the difficulties of the situation. Therefore, the expulsion of Bukharin and a few others will not contribute to the clarification of the situation. A total section of the class, which does not appear to be inconsiderable, has to be suppressed. That means carrying the civil war into our own camp and that is a perilous game. If the views advocated by Bukharin and his followers were really an expression of tiredness, pessimism and a departure from the revolutionary determination of the proletariat, then this ought to be explained to the workers in sympathy with these views. In the fight against almost overwhelming difficulties all resources of the revolutionary class must be actively employed in solving the tasks. This is the more necessary in a country where the proletariat represents only a small part of the population. Internal terror does not lead to consolidation but to destruction of the forces of the revolutionary class. The sacrificing of Bukharin and some other leaders of the right Opposition will not convince their followers that the views attributed to them are incorrect. Rather it will contribute to the growth of weariness, pessimism and apathy of a considerable section of the proletariat, in which many are to be counted who, before and after winning power, have fought for the Revolution. The result will be inevitably a weakening of the party of the revolutionary class. Those who today are following Bukharin and his allies, will perhaps submit dutifully to official policy after their leaders have been put out of action; but they will certainly not participate wholeheartedly. Thus the internal terror will not succeed in achieving its actual purpose. It will not lead to an internal consolidation which is so vital in the face of the present enormous difficulties.

By nature the proletariat is the most homogeneous social class. The differences of opinion which arise from time to time in its Party during the struggle as well as over gaining and maintaining power are therefore not irreconcilable as happens in other classes. The latter are interlocked with one another, and therefore create the possibility for the representatives of the interests of one class to operate within the party of another class. But the proletariat is so clearly delineated from all other classes that there is no room in its party for the representatives of another class, with the exception of individual adventurers or agitators. Therefore, differences of opinion within the Communist Party do not present a clash of class-interests. At worst, if the Party is in power in an underdeveloped country such as Russia, it reflects indirectly the post-revolutionary class-struggle under the conditions of which the dictatorship of the proletariat has to be maintained. But even in this case the Communist Party does in no way become the ground on which the representatives of hostile class-interests can collide. The possible and inevitable differences in the views do not concern the basic tasks of the Revolution. They relate rather to the methods of realizing these tasks. Therefore, it is not necessary to adopt terrorist measures to suppress these differences of opinion which could, after all, be overcome by the use of internal party democracy. If the Party is really acting as the most progressive yet inseparable part of the class, if the leaders have confidence in the masses, then the latter can be the judges who decide in matter of differences of opinion among the leaders. The leaders are cutting each other's throats in the base struggle for personal or clique-power, if they are unable to present their diverging views any longer to the whole class for judgement.

The use of internal terror was inevitable in the case of the dictatorship instituted by the great French Revolution. It was not the dictatorship of a homogeneous class. The Jacobin Club which exercised the dictatorship was the meeting point of the proletariat as well as the progressive elements of the bourgeoisie. In spite of its predominantly proletarian composition 'sansculottism' was not a kind of Bolshevism. Its social structure stood in sharpest contradiction to its historical mission which consisted in driving forward the hesitating bourgeoisie in the battle for the destruction of the old regime. Becoming the scene of a heated clash between two historically antagonistic social forces, the Jacobin Club could not avoid convulsing, splitting and destroying itself through the terror-regime which it established for the eradication of the enemies of the Revolution. Dantonism and sansculottism were irreconcilable, for the first consciously represented the interests of the bourgeoisie whilst the latter was the violent uprising of the oppressed masses. Sansculottism triumphed over Dantonism insofar as it forced a few of the representatives of the bourgeoisie to suppress their more moderate colleagues. In order to justify himself in the eyes of his own class for the crime of having murdered Danton, Robespierre employed the Jacobin terror even against sansculottism although his power stemmed from it. Within the Jacobin Club more than ten heads fell for every one from the camp of the bourgeoisie. Thus Robespierre cut down the branch on which he was sitting and therefore made his own fall inevitable. Danton's head fell but Dantonism survived the terror to assert itself during the Thermidor.

It is mad to employ the same method of a suicidal, internal terror in the case of a Party which is not in the least the arena of similar acute class-conflicts. The homogeneous nature of its class-composition guarantees that the Party of the proletarian Revolution acts like an iron [clad] cohort. Any doubt or a deviation within its ranks is not necessarily the threatening voice of a hostile class. It simply indicates wavering on the side of certain sections of the revolutionary army. The weak and wavering could be moved to a less difficult point of the battlefront and be filled again with revolutionary courage and enthusiasm by the lessons of the victorious development of the struggle. Why must we put them under the sledge-hammer of terror and thus allow them to be lost irretrievably for the Revolution?

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is in the strict sense of its social composition not a party of the proletarian dictatorship. Lenin himself admitted this. The industrial backwardness of the country obliged the Communist Party to find support also among the semi-proletarian (peasant) class.[12] Consequently the inner-party democracy in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union cannot be preserved unconditionally. Nevertheless, the suppression of views which represent departures from the principles of the dictatorship and express non-proletarian interests would be more effective and of more use for the Revolution, if it were preceded by an ideological preparation in which the most progressive proletarian elements participated. At the same time this would make the internal party democracy a little more than an abstract principle.

If internal terror is detrimental for a Party in power under conditions of economic backwardness, where the dictatorship of the proletariat has to be maintained during a long period of post-revolutionary class-warfare, how much more so is it the case for Parties which still have the task to mobilize the masses for the coming power struggle? Nonetheless, all sections of the Communist International have been subjugated to a regimen of true terror within the International. Terror is a useful weapon in the hands of a revolutionary class which is in power. The fact that only one of its sections is in power has developed a ridiculous psychology in the whole of the International. The present leaders of the Communist International and all its sections are acting as though they also had the power, and they are sunning themselves in the glory of the Russian Party. The more they exercise the internal terror with increasingly frenzied violence the more they are incapable of employing this revolutionary weapon in the right place. By means of this ridiculous power psychology the current leaders will seriously hamper the development of the parties, and thus the latter will be very far removed from the actual gaining of power.

The Communist Party does not fall from heaven ready-made. It grows out of the years of struggle of the working class, embodying all experiences and lessons of the struggle. If a hundred per cent knowledge of the theory of communism and the correct view on how it is to be put into practice were the conditions of admission to the Communist Party, it would win only few members. The most progressive elements of the working class who wish to lead the revolutionary fight against the prevailing social conditions gather under the banner of the Communist Party to be educated in the theory and practice of class-warfare. Hence there has to be differences of opinion within the Communist Parties which are preparing the proletariat for the Revolution. The only way out of these differences of opinion towards unity lies in a frank discussion of all questions concerning the strategy and tactics of the Revolution within the framework of communist principles. That is the only way to bring the Communist Party to maturity, to 'bolshevize' it, indeed it is the fundamental condition for its final success, for grasping power. Whenever a discussion becomes necessary it must be carried on simultaneously with actions whose experiences will solve the debated questions definitively in the one or the other manner. The regime of internal terror which, in imitation of the Russian Party, has been introduced to all other sections of the International, has not only hindered the latter from reinforcing itself by drawing new lessons from the present class-struggle, but it has even robbed it of those forces by which it was created originally.

Besides the Russian Revolution there were two other forces which contributed to the foundation of the Communist International: 1. the revolutionary old guard of the workers' movement who had resisted for years the social-democratic reformism and who finally broke into open revolt over the great betrayal of 1914; and 2. the new young cadres who grew up spontaneously out of the whirlwind of the war and the following mass insurrections. The former brought with them some vestiges of social-democratic traditions, whilst the latter suffered from youthful exuberance. The initial task of the Communist International was to forge these factors into an ideologically, politically and organizationally firm and united revolutionary avant-garde of the proletariat. Under Lenin's leadership this task was accomplished correctly with remarkable success during the first years of the Comintern. Cured of the 'teething problems of left radicalism', the new forces promised to make a valuable contribution to the development of the proletarian revolution, individually and collectively. This gain of a new revolutionary vitality helped on the other hand the old guard to rid itself of potential social-democratic deviants. The development progressed in a well-balanced process.

This process was then disrupted through the introduction of strong-arm measures for the regulation of internal party differences. That was the result of the faction-fighting which developed within the Russian party after Lenin's death. There were always differences of opinion in the Russian party. Lenin fought all divergences, to the right or the left, ideological ones, within the confines of the proletarian democracy. After he was no longer active as leader, the terror was introduced into the internal party regime. It did not take long for this pernicious method to spread to the whole of the International. In quick succession one party-leadership after another was installed, and because of a departure to the 'right' or the 'left' deposed again. A consequence of this was that both factors which originally contributed to the founding of the Communist International were not only excluded from the leadership but were finally even expelled from the party itself. This expulsion would not be as tragic if it had taken place in a normal course of development, in which new forces grow up to replace the old ones that fail to keep pace with the movement. Those who now stand at the head of the Communist Party have come there not by dint of their superior capacities, but as a consequence of the disastrous terror-regime of the Party. The threat of expulsion is not only preventing the members from expressing their opinions freely. What is worse, the terror-regime is giving rise to unscrupulousness and the loss of principles. Old proletarian elements are passively accepting a politics with which they are not in agreement, for the simple reason that they do not want to be thrown out of the Communist Party, to which they have been attached since its inception. Under these conditions, it is hardly surprising that all the party functions are mostly attended by members who have been (on an average) in the party for only a few years.

Internal terror applied by a party-in-power is harmful enough—it endangers the future of the revolution. But the application of internal terror by parties which are yet to capture power is simply catastrophic, because, in reality, it amounts to helping the enemy who will seriously hinder the growth of the revolutionary party.

2 November 1929.

VI. The 'Bolshevization'*

> '. . . It has to be understood clearly that such a leading centre cannot be erected under any circumstances on the stereotype of mechanical stabilization, giving uniformity of fighting tactics. As long as national and state differences exist between peoples and countries—and such differences will remain for a long time, for a very long time indeed, on a world scale even after the realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the unitedness of international tactics of the workers' movement in all countries would not demand the abolition of being different, not the elimination of national differences (that is at the given moment a nonsensical dream), but use of the fundamental principles of Communism (Soviet-power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), and correct adaptation of these principles in details in such a way that they are rightly applied and adapted to the national and national-state differences. To discover, to study and to comprehend the peculiarly national, the specifically national in the *applied methods* (Konkreten methoden) of every country for the solution of the one international task, for victory over opportunism and the "radical" doctrinairism within the workers' movement, for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for the establishment of the Soviet Republic and the dictatorship of the proletariat—that is the most important task of this historic moment, through which all advanced countries (and not only the advanced ones) are moving.'
>
> (Lenin: *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder.*)[13]

The Russian Revolution has opened up a new period in world history. It is the period of the proletarian socialist revolution, the conquest of the political power of government by the working class. The foundation of the Communist International was a necessity of this new period. The principal task of the Communist International is to mobilize and lead the working class of the whole world in the struggle for power. The coming into being of the Communist International with this task presumes that the workers' movement has passed the stage where it was still involved in the defence and promotion of its interests *within* the confines of the capitalist order. At the new stage of its activity the working class comes into conflict with the bourgeois state and therefore must grow itself in order to overthrow it and replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The new perspective was so attractive that the immature elements in the revolutionary ranks lost their head [literally, eyesight] and recommended tactics which had been condemned by Lenin as the 'Infantile Disorder of Left-Wing Communism'. The principal cause of the trouble was the inability to comprehend that the new perspective is *the perspective of a whole period,*—that the inevitable conquest of state power by the proletariat in other countries perhaps does not progress as quickly as the youthful enthusiasts would wish it. They forgot that the preceding period of the bourgeois–democratic revolution needed several hundred years. There are many reasons for the proletarian revolution not necessarily requiring such a long time. Nevertheless, one must not expect that it would be accomplished at one blow. Indeed, the illusion about the progress of the revolution which had commenced in Russia was not limited to the radical left. At first the whole Communist International practically shared [this view]. The capitalist order in Europe had been shaken so strongly by the World War that, for a time, it appeared possible that the Revolution initiated in Russia would spread like wildfire. The German revolution, the 'soviet' republics of Hungary and Bavaria, the popular movement in other leading countries, strong agitation in the colonies—all these stirrings seemed for a time strong enough to overthrow the capitalist order in the whole world. The defeat of the German Spartacus uprising in 1919 was the sign of the turning of the flood. Nevertheless, Lenin himself expected even as late as 1920 that the Revolution would progress in a straight line. The Polish conflict was embarked upon in the hope that the advance of the Red Army would accelerate the process of the revolutionary development in the West, particularly in Germany. The tactics were quite correct—for revolutionary leadership. Whilst the situation was acutely revolutionary, bold and determined efforts had to be made to defeat the enemy.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 50, pp. 7–9, 14 Dec. 1929. SNR.

However, at the same time as leading the frontal attack, Lenin already had his sights on the more probable line of development, and established the tactical principles which the communists should adhere to in case the frontal attack was to fail. The lines quoted above had been written by him prior to the Polish conflict. Even then he saw clearly that should the revolution in the west be indeed the result of a frontal attack by the victorious Russian proletariat, the achievements would bear the stamp of 'national and national-state peculiarities'. He finally stated that the Russian Revolution would not be the model for the proletariat in every other country, although it signified the beginning of the era of the proletarian Revolution. A favourable combination of circumstances of a national and international character contributed to the victory of the working class in Russia. The evolution of the Revolution and the eventual taking over of state-power by the proletariat in other countries must similarly be determined by the circumstances in which they find themselves. While Lenin founded the Communist International as the leading centre of the global revolution, he stated explicitly that uniform tactics which did not consider local peculiarities were not the stipulation of such a centre. He foresaw that even the might of the Soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat, if realized in other countries, would not exactly correspond to its Russian example—their types could perhaps be in need of suitable alterations due to 'national and national-state differences'.

The present crisis in the Communist International is the result of a departure from these tactical principles which were formulated at its inception. Lenin formulated these principles when fighting the 'infantile disorder of Left-wing communism'. Under his leadership the Communist International overcame the danger of left-radicalism by adhering to a correct tactical line. The present departure from this line means, however, a relapse into the former infantile disorder.

The theory of a third stage [period] which was introduced at the 6th Congress, and the tactical line built on this theory, cannot be justified without relinquishing Lenin's tactical principles.[14] The basic principle formulated on the eve of the Polish conflict—not the elimination of national differences—was confirmed fully by the tragic consequences of that frontal attack. The defeat in the Polish conflict made it obvious that the influence of nationalism on the working class in Poland had been underestimated. It showed that the general sympathy of the west-European proletariat for the Russian Revolution in no way indicated unconditional willingness to proceed immediately along the same path. It showed that the objective conditions for gaining state-power by the working class in West-Europe are not yet as favourable as they were some years earlier in Russia. It further revealed the regrettable fact that the revolutionary tide in the West had suffered a serious setback since the defeat of the Spartacus uprising in Germany. In brief, it became obvious that the period of the proletarian Revolution initiated by the victory of the Russian working class had to be a relatively lengthy one: that the view of gaining state-power by the working class was the view of a whole historical epoch. There was no short-cut to power. The indeterminate sympathy of the working class for the Russian Soviet Republic had yet to be developed into a conscious determination of the masses for the conquering of state-power under the leadership of the Communist Party. A basic mass-revolt against the catastrophic consequences of the imperialist war had led directly to the fall in Russia of those responsible for them, but [the fall of the rulers] was mainly due to their weakness. In Western Europe the same forces failed to reach the same goal. There they met with a resistance which was far stronger than they were able to overcome, and they themselves were overcome more or less easily. Under the leadership of Lenin the Communist International quickly learned its lessons from defeats. The so-called theory of an offensive, which was the echo of the receding revolutionary tide, was rejected by the 3rd Congress. The opportunist characterization of the March uprising in central Germany as a 'putsch' was attacked, although the Congress refused to consider the March action as the beginning of a new revolutionary offensive of the masses. While the 2nd Congress had still fostered the hope of a quick victory by the Revolution, the long-range view of the battle for power was brought into clear focus by the 3rd Congress which decided that the main task of the Communist Parties lay in gaining the support of the masses. The successful realization of this task depends on proper consideration being given to Lenin's tactical principles. The departure from these principles means the dropping of this task (from the programme).

The process of Bolshevization of the sections of the Communist International which comprised at that time mainly youthful, immature elements, began when the third Congress issued the rallying cry: 'To the masses and with the masses to revolutionary battle.' During the following years steady progress was made. Various sections of the Communist International developed into mass-parties. Yet, this task was far from being accomplished as far as the whole International was concerned. On the other hand, the enemy also regained its old position. When the 3rd Congress gave up the tactic of frontal attack and set the movement for a lengthy period of battle, Europe had by no means recovered from the shock of the war. The capitalist economy was still in a condition of utter disorder, the boom in business and trade after the armistice was short[-lived]. The political position in the defeated states of central Europe as well as in the newly created east-European states was still very insecure. But without the support of the masses the communists could not utilize this still favourable objective situation. The balance of power suddenly became unpropitious for offensive action by the Communist Parties. The defeat of the Communist Party of Germany in 1923, the strongest section in the International next to the Russian [and] the only one which had progressed rather far in accomplishing the task of Bolshevization, was a decisive turning-point. It was followed by the defeat in Bulgaria and a strong decline in the colonial movement. The capitalist consolidation in Germany ended for the time being the immediate prospect of a revolution in Europe. All these events and the resulting triumph of reaction proved how correct the resolution of the 3rd Congress had been. The task of mobilizing the masses under the leadership of the Communist Party in preparation for taking up the battle for the direct conquest of state power became more vital than ever.

Meanwhile, however, the Communist International fell victim to a great misfortune. It lost its founder and leader whose sharp vision and sure foresight had pointed it in the right direction. Under the stunning blow of the year 1923, the leadership of the Communist International swerved from the path marked out by Lenin.* The history of the foiled German Revolution of 1923 still has to be written. If it is written in an unbiased fashion, it will bear witness that the leadership of the Communist International has not drawn the correct lesson from the defeat. It was wrong to blame the alleged opportunism of the leading German comrades alone for the defeat. If bad leadership was the cause of the defeat, then the German comrades cannot be solely held responsible. Give the devil his due, yet there still remains a very large portion for the gods. If errors contributed to the defeat, then they were the errors of the international leadership. But the errors were not the deciding factor whoever may have been responsible for them. The deciding factor was the objective condition, the balance of forces.[15] This deciding factor is not sufficiently taken into consideration because, in spite of Lenin's warning, the Russian Revolution is still regarded as the model for the proletarian revolution. The Russian Communist Party gained power because it had a bolshevik leadership. From this hypothesis the conclusion is drawn that the German Party was unsuccessful because it did not have a bolshevik leadership. No examination is made of whether the national and international situation in Germany in 1923 was as favourable for the acquisition of power by the working class as it had been in Russia six years ago. And what is more important, no examination is made of whether the majority of the working class in 1923 stood behind the Communist Party. In order to shake off responsibility for its part in the defeat, which was considerable, the Russian leaders of the Communist International adopted such tactics in Germany that were a departure from the way towards Bolshevization on which the German Communist Party has already advanced some distance. And the tragedy of the situation was that the straight course to Bolshevization was abandoned with the call for 'Bolshevization!' Lenin had died, and with his death the ability of the Russian section to lead the international had ceased.

The 5th Congress announced the approaching crisis of the Communist International which burst forth fully at the 6th Congress. The ultra-left leadership which was imposed on the German Party exhibited in a hardly altered form the infantile disorder against which Lenin had fought in such a determined way and which had been overcome largely since the 3rd Congress by the process of real Bolshevization. That is, through the steady growth of the view that *the party*

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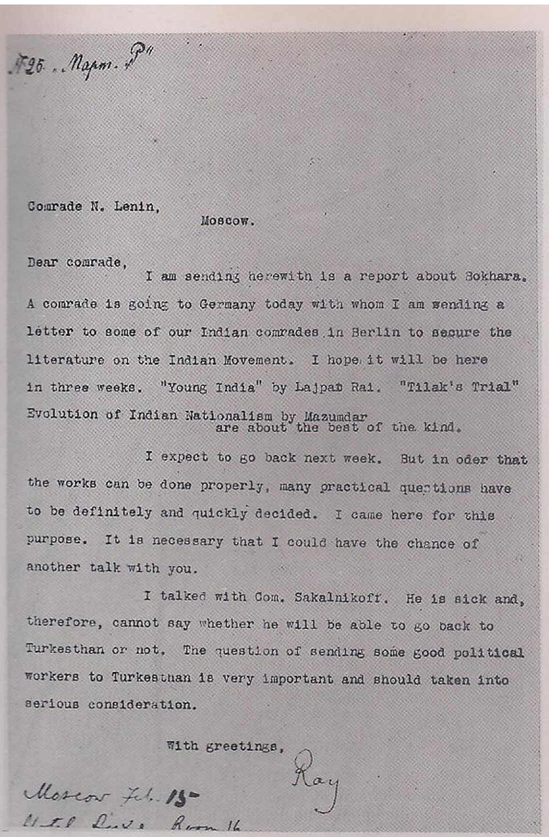
* Lenin died on 21 Jan. 1924, but he had already been completely incapacitated by his third stroke in March 1923. SNR.

of the proletarian Revolution must be the party of the masses. Since Lenin's death the meaning of Bolshevization had changed. It became the *direct opposite*. Finally, 'Bolshevization' came to mean the subjugation of the party by a bureaucratic apparatus that endeavoured to lead the international movement by a fixed set of tactical rules without consideration of the real situation. The result was inevitably not only the prevention of the actual Bolshevization of the party but also its ruin. This tragic process recently reached its height in the case of the Swedish Party.[16]

At the 6th Congress it was reported that the Swedish Party was the only section of the Communist International which in the previous year had made progress in gaining support of the masses. The reason was that the Swedish section, which was not a leading section of the International, had not been drawn into the whirlpool of faction-fighting within the Russian Party. Therefore, it was relatively free of the oppressive supervision of the international apparatus which had eventually usurped the place of central political leadership, and it could develop its own initiatives. After the Swedish section had become a mass Party it could no longer be left out of the calculations of the Russian faction-fights. The 10th Plenum suddenly became suspicious because of the extraordinary situation of the Swedish Party. How was it able to grow when all other sections were stagnating or even regressing if its leadership were not an opportunist one? The tactic which gains the masses for the Communist Party is 'opportunism'! 'Bolshevization' is the destruction of the only Party which had not suffered on account of the crisis of the Communist International under the amazing pretext that we need 'qualitative not quantitative growth'. 'Opportunism' mobilized thousands of workers around the Communist Party. The 'Bolshevization' has driven between 12,000 to 18,000 members from the party.

What was done so grossly in Sweden has also occurred in other countries. England, too, presents a sorry picture.[17] In no other country are the conditions today as favourable for the growth of the Communist Party as they are in England. For years the policy of the Party was an opportunist application of the tactical principles formulated by Lenin at the 2nd Congress. They consisted in [the Party] hiding behind the Labour Party. The English communists worked well within the unions but not as communists, rather as unionists. Consequently no organizational advantages could be gained from the communist activity in the unions. The Communist Party was not active as an independent revolutionary Party of the Proletariat but in fact functioned as the left wing of the Labour Party. During elections communist support for the Labour Party was practically unconditional. This increased the worker's illusion about the Labour Gov-



№25 „Парт. Р"

Comrade N. Lenin,
Moscow.

Dear comrade,

I am sending herewith is a report about Bokhara. A comrade is going to Germany today with whom I am wending a letter to some of our Indian comrades in Berlin to secure the literature on the Indian Movement. I hope it will be here in three weeks. "Young India" by Lajpat Rai. "Tilak's Trial" Evolution of Indian Nationalism by Mazumdar are about the best of the kind.

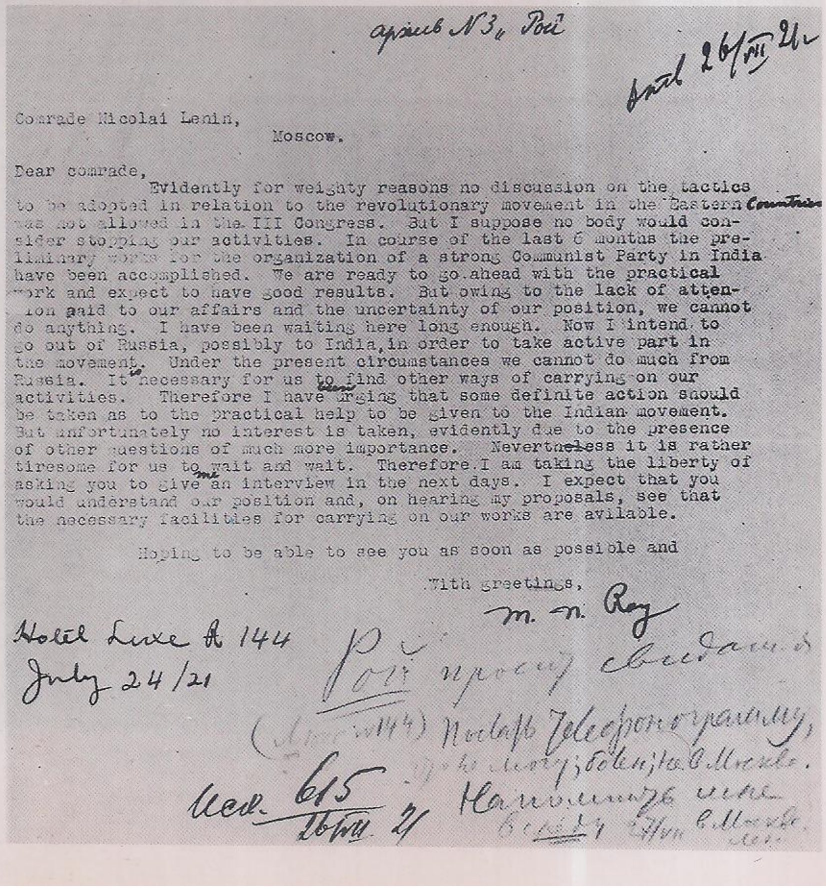
I expect to go back next week. But in oder that the works can be done properly, many practical questions have to be definitely and quickly decided. I came here for this purpose. It is necessary that I could have the chance of another talk with you.

I talked with Com. Sakalnikoff. He is sick and, therefore, cannot say whether he will be able to go back to Turkesthan or not. The question of sending some good political workers to Turkesthan is very important and should taken into serious consideration.

With greetings,
Roy

Moscow Feb. 15th
Hotel Luxe Room 16

M. N. Roy's letter to V.I. Lenin, February 1921



архив №3, Рой

Отв. 26/VII 21 г.

Comrade Nicolai Lenin,
Moscow.

Dear comrade,

Evidently for weighty reasons no discussion on the tactics to be adopted in relation to the revolutionary movement in the Eastern Countries was not allowed in the III Congress. But I suppose no body would consider stopping our activities. In course of the last 6 months the preliminary works for the organization of a strong Communist Party in India have been accomplished. We are ready to go ahead with the practical work and expect to have good results. But owing to the lack of attention paid to our affairs and the uncertainty of our position, we cannot do anything. I have been waiting here long enough. Now I intend to go out of Russia, possibly to India, in order to take active part in the movement. Under the present circumstances we cannot do much from Russia. It is necessary for us to find other ways of carrying on our activities. Therefore I have been urging that some definite action should be taken as to the practical help to be given to the Indian movement. But unfortunately no interest is taken, evidently due to the presence of other questions of much more importance. Nevertheless it is rather tiresome for us to wait and wait. Therefore I am taking the liberty of asking you to give me an interview in the next days. I expect that you would understand our position and, on hearing my proposals, see that the necessary facilities for carrying on our works are avilable.

Hoping to be able to see you as soon as possible and

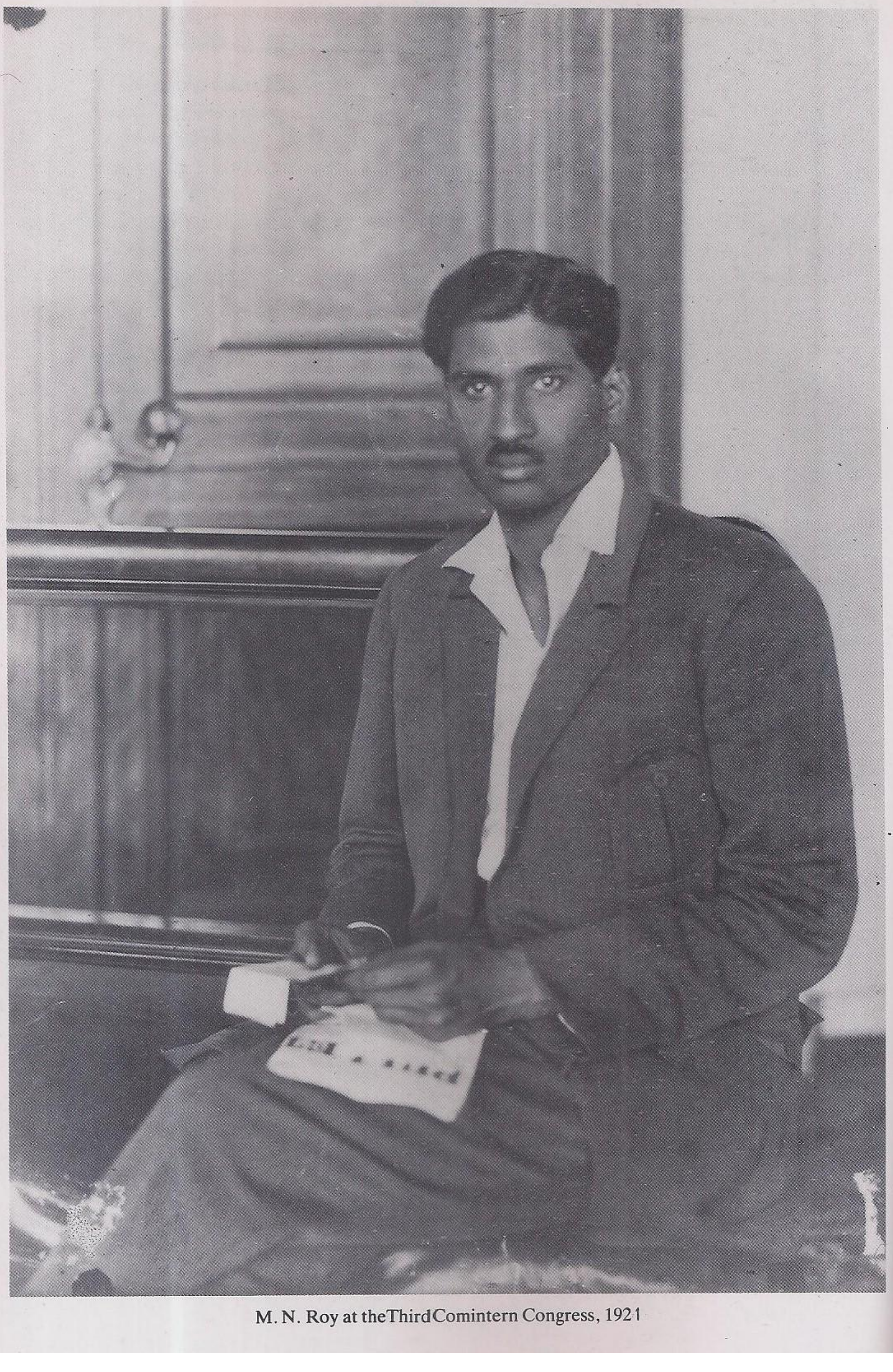
With greetings,
M. N. Roy

Hotel Luxe R 144
July 24/21

Рой просит свидания
(Люкс 144) Послать телефонограмму,
что я болен, нет в Москве.
Напомнить мне
в среду, [illegible] в Москве.

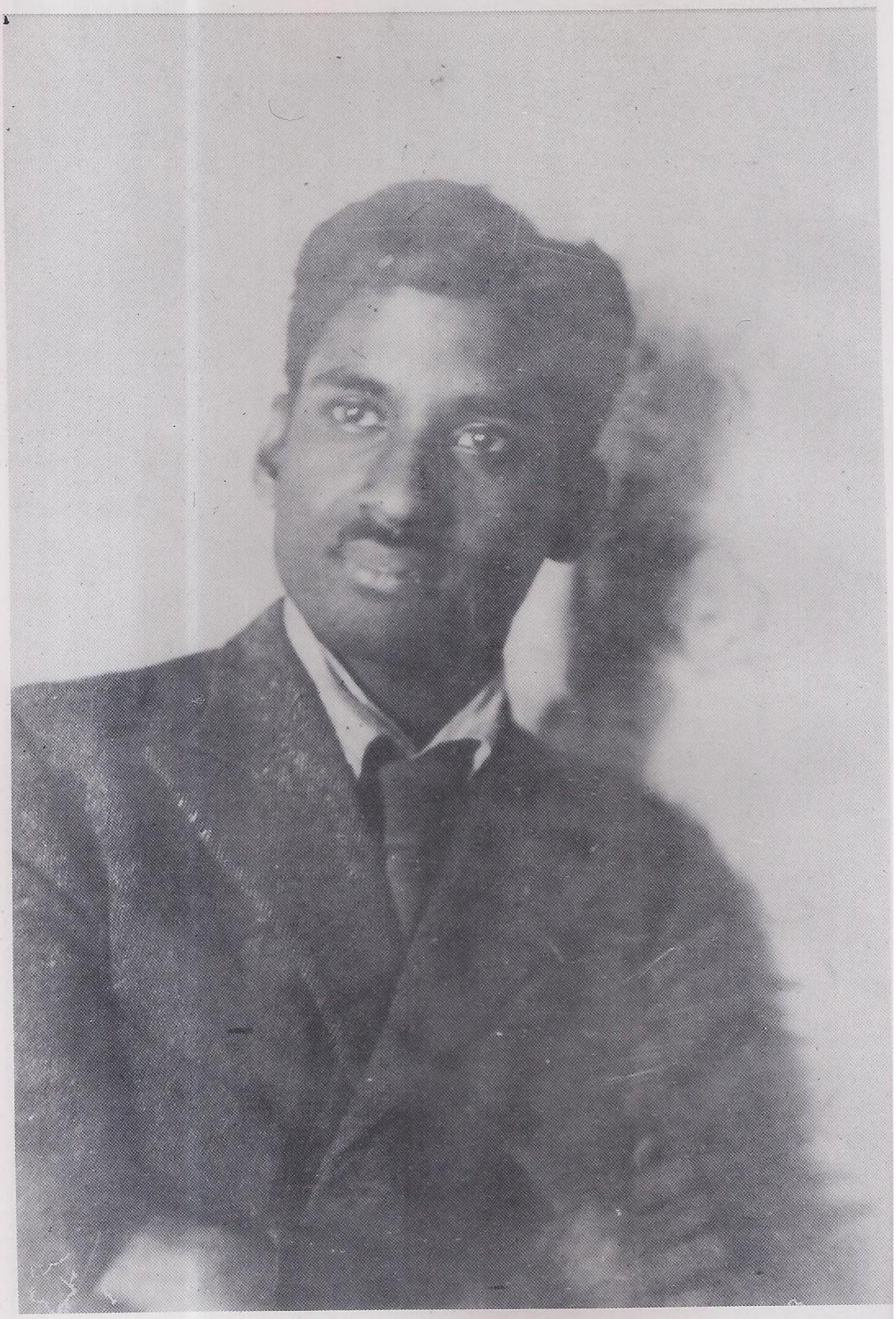
Исх. 615
26/VII 21

M. N. Roy's letter to
V.I. Lenin,
July 1921



M. N. Roy at the Third Comintern Congress, 1921

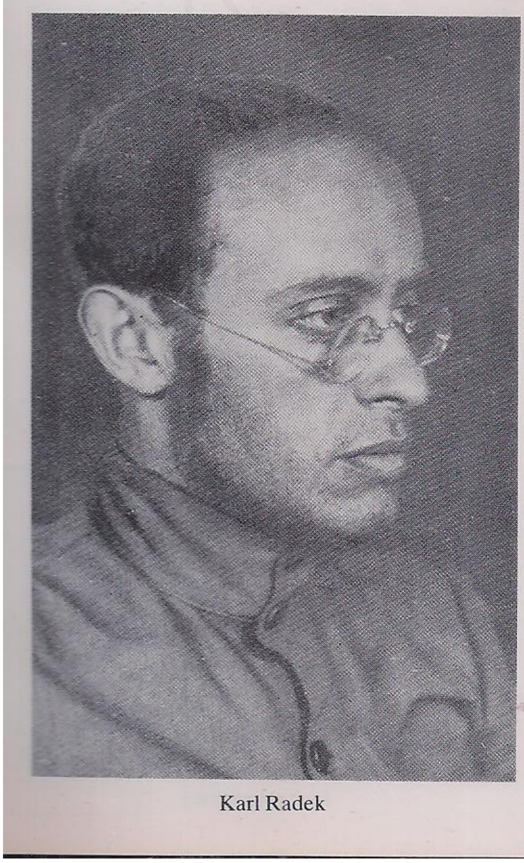
M. N. Roy at the Fourth Comintern Congress, 1922



M. N. Roy at the Fifth Comintern Congress, 1924

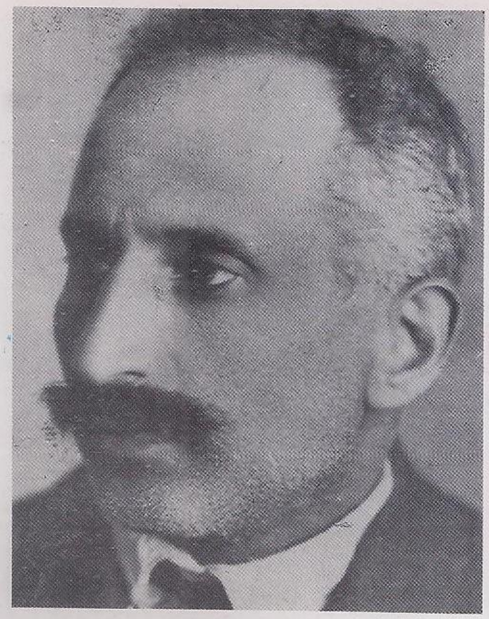
L. D. Trotsky, 1917

J. V. Stalin, 1917


Karl Radek

Nikolai Bukharin

O. V. Kuusinen



O. Piatnitsky

S. A. Lozovsky

D. Z. Manuilsky

M. Rakosi

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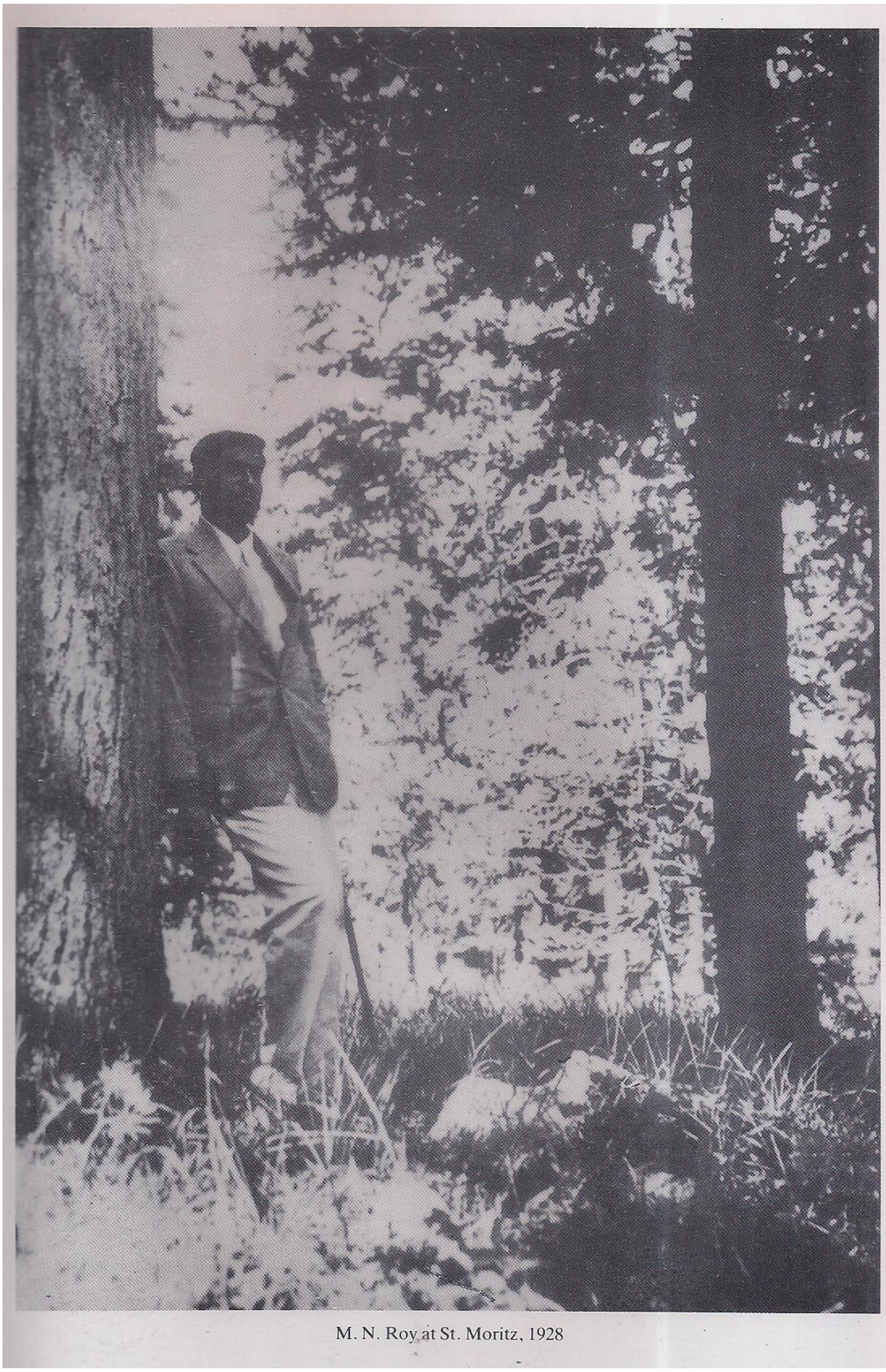
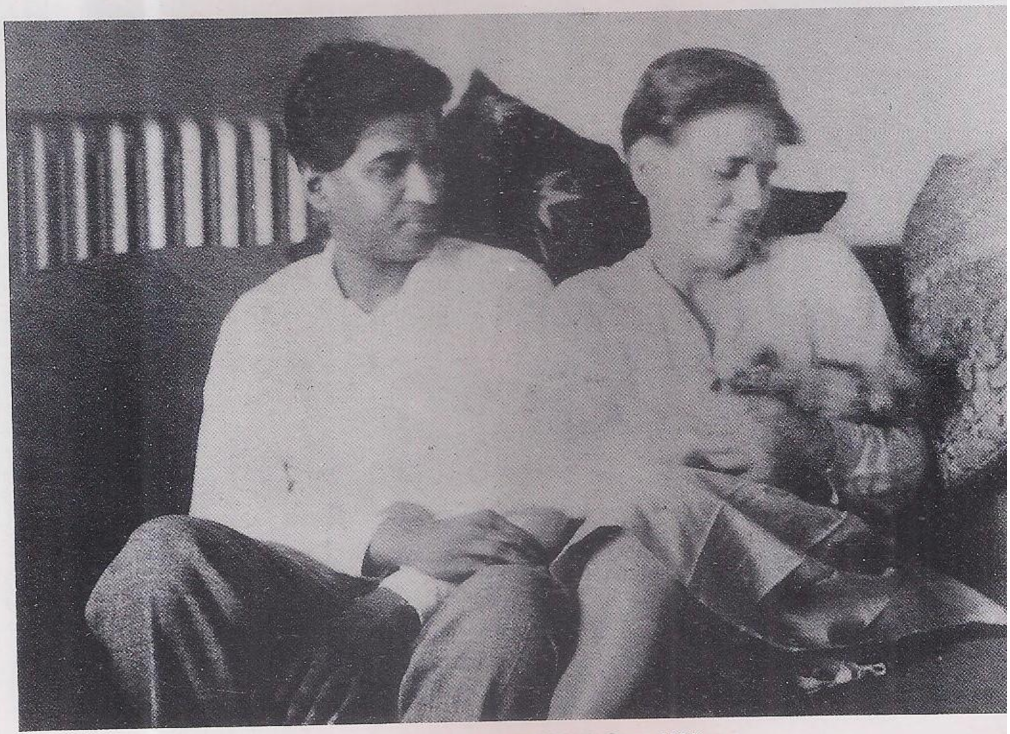
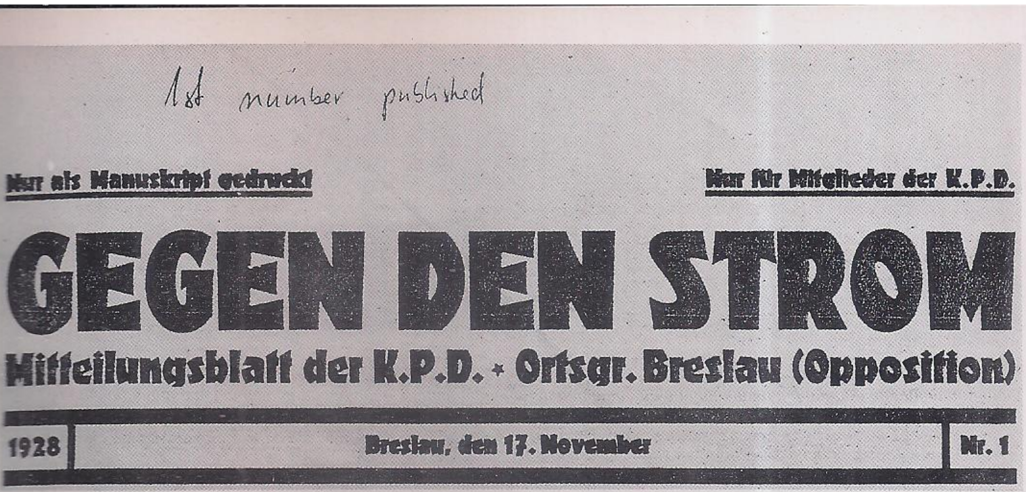


M. N. Roy at St. Moritz, 1928

Louise Geissler, 1928



Louise Geissler and M. N. Roy, 1929



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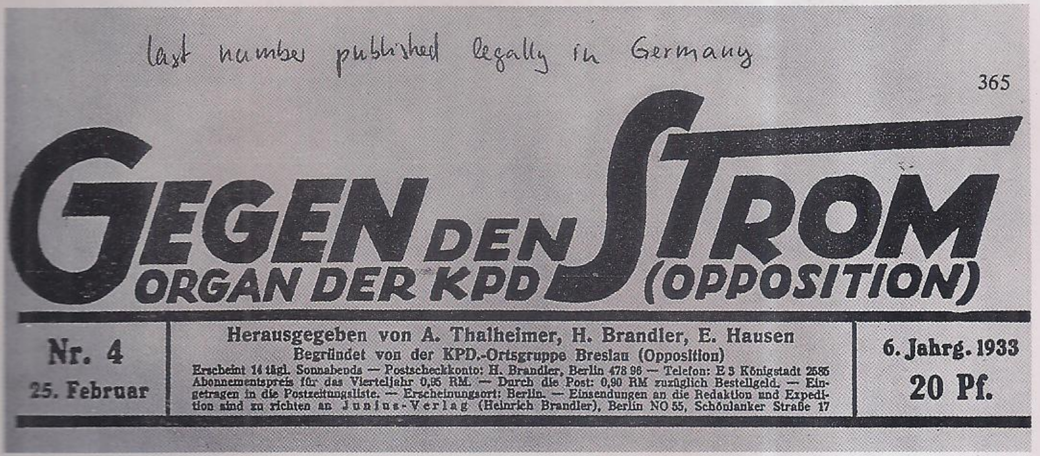

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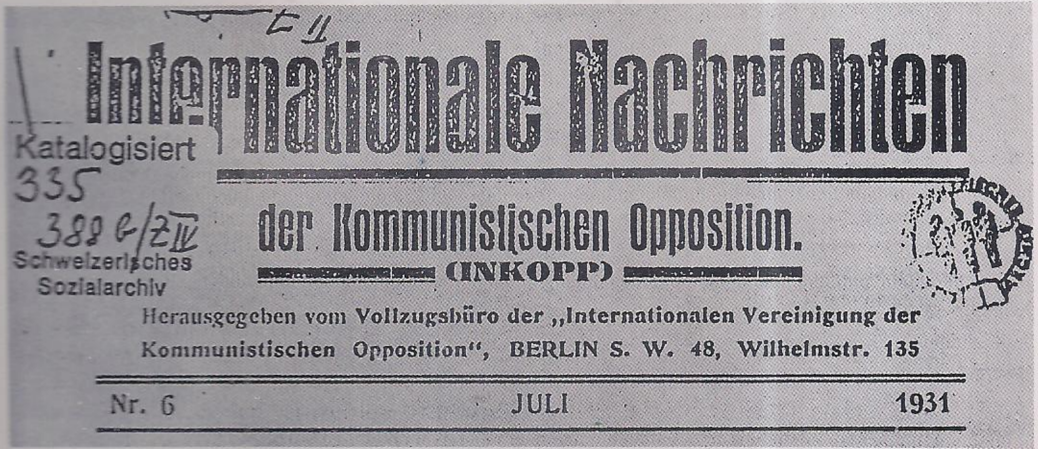

Internationale Nachrichten

der Kommunistischen Opposition.

(INKOPP)

Herausgegeben vom Vollzugsbüro der „Internationalen Vereinigung der Kommunistischen Opposition“, BERLIN S. W. 48, Wilhelmstr. 135

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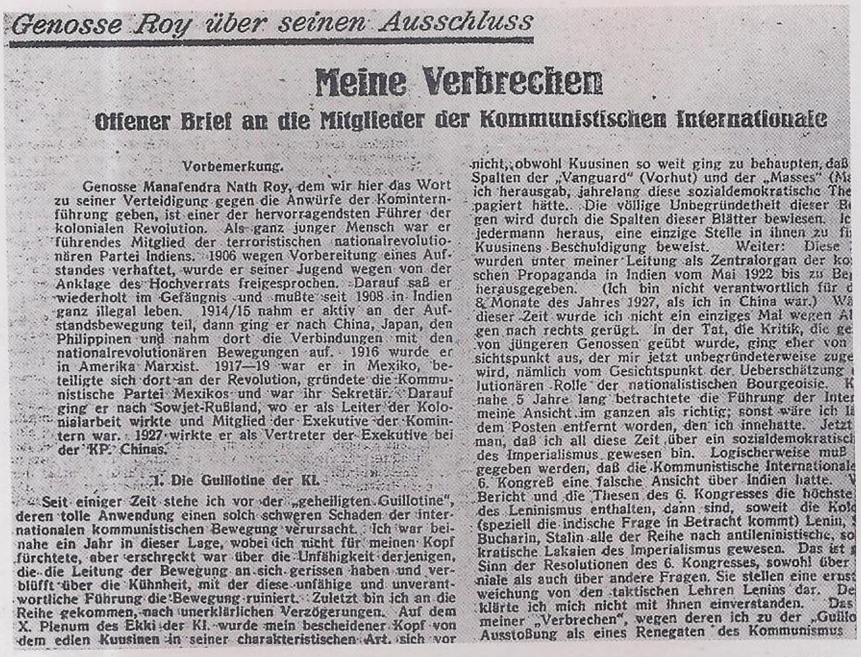


Genosse Roy über seinen Ausschluss

Meine Verbrechen

Offener Brief an die Mitglieder der Kommunistischen Internationale

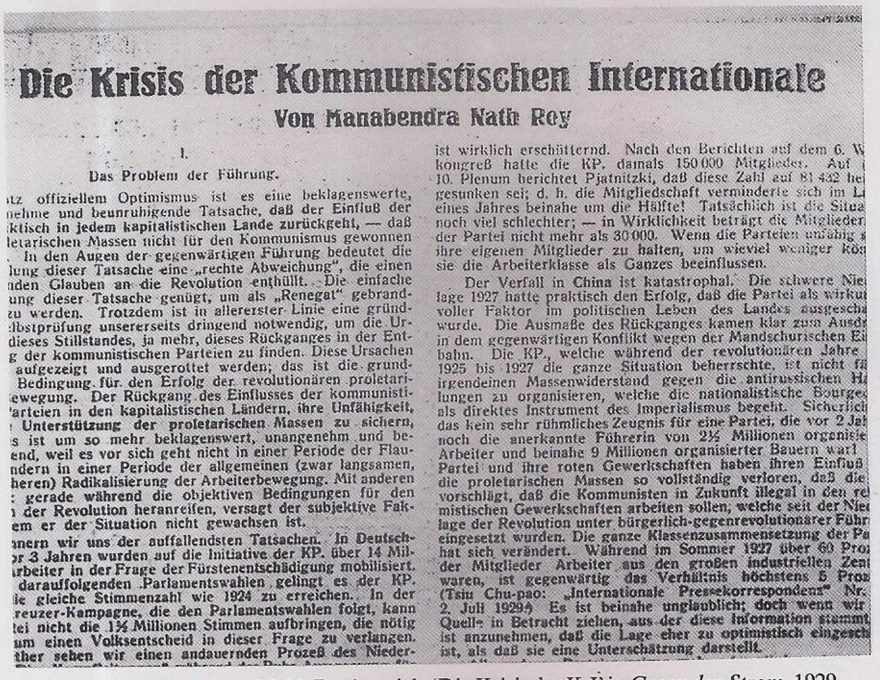
Vorbemerkung.

Genosse Manafendra Nath Roy, dem wir hier das Wort zu seiner Verteidigung gegen die Anwürfe der Kominternführung geben, ist einer der hervorragendsten Führer der kolonialen Revolution. Als ganz junger Mensch war er führendes Mitglied der terroristischen nationalrevolutionären Partei Indiens. 1906 wegen Vorbereitung eines Aufstandes verhaftet, wurde er seiner Jugend wegen von der Anklage des Hochverrats freigesprochen. Darauf saß er wiederholt im Gefängnis und mußte seit 1908 in Indien ganz illegal leben. 1914/15 nahm er aktiv an der Aufstandsbewegung teil, dann ging er nach China, Japan, den Philippinen und nahm dort die Verbindungen mit den nationalrevolutionären Bewegungen auf. 1916 wurde er in Amerika Marxist. 1917—19 war er in Mexiko, beteiligte sich dort an der Revolution, gründete die Kommunistische Partei Mexikos und war ihr Sekretär. Darauf ging er nach Sowjet-Rußland, wo er als Leiter der Kolonialarbeit wirkte und Mitglied der Exekutive der Komintern war. 1927 wirkte er als Vertreter der Exekutive bei der KP. Chinas.

I. Die Guillotine der KI.

Seit einiger Zeit stehe ich vor der „geheiligten Guillotine", deren tolle Anwendung einen solch schweren Schaden der internationalen kommunistischen Bewegung verursacht. Ich war beinahe ein Jahr in dieser Lage, wobei ich nicht für meinen Kopf fürchtete, aber erschreckt war über die Unfähigkeit derjenigen, die die Leitung der Bewegung an sich gerissen haben und verblüfft über die Kühnheit, mit der diese unfähige und unverantwortliche Führung die Bewegung ruiniert. Zuletzt bin ich an die Reihe gekommen, nach unerklärlichen Verzögerungen. Auf dem X. Plenum des Ekki der KI. wurde mein bescheidener Kopf von dem edlen Kuusinen in seiner charakteristischen Art. sich vor
nicht, obwohl Kuusinen so weit ging zu behaupten, daß
Spalten der „Vanguard" (Vorhut) und der „Masses" (M
ich herausgab, jahrelang diese sozialdemokratische The
pagiert hätte. Die völlige Unbegründetheit dieser B
gen wird durch die Spalten dieser Blätter bewiesen. Ic
jedermann heraus, eine einzige Stelle in ihnen zu fi
Kuusinens Beschuldigung beweist. Weiter: Diese
wurden unter meiner Leitung als Zentralorgan der ko
schen Propaganda in Indien vom Mai 1922 bis zu Be
herausgegeben. (Ich bin nicht verantwortlich für d
8 Monate des Jahres 1927, als ich in China war.) Wä
dieser Zeit wurde ich nicht ein einziges Mal wegen A
gen nach rechts gerügt. In der Tat, die Kritik, die ge
von jüngeren Genossen geübt wurde, ging eher von
sichtspunkt aus, der mir jetzt unbegründeterweise zuge
wird, nämlich vom Gesichtspunkt der Ueberschätzung
lutionären Rolle der nationalistischen Bourgeoisie. K
nahe 5 Jahre lang betrachtete die Führung der Inte
meine Ansicht im ganzen als richtig; sonst wäre ich l
dem Posten entfernt worden, den ich innehatte. Jetzt
man, daß ich all diese Zeit über ein sozialdemokratisch
des Imperialismus gewesen bin. Logischerweise muß
gegeben werden, daß die Kommunistische Internationale
6. Kongreß eine falsche Ansicht über Indien hatte. V
Bericht und die Thesen des 6. Kongresses die höchste
des Leninismus enthalten, dann sind, soweit die Kol
(speziell die indische Frage in Betracht kommt) Lenin,
Bucharin, Stalin alle der Reihe nach antileninistische, so
kratische Lakaien des Imperialismus gewesen. Das ist
Sinn der Resolutionen des 6. Kongresses, sowohl über
niale als auch über andere Fragen. Sie stellen eine erns
weichung von den taktischen Lehren Lenins dar. De
klärte ich mich nicht mit ihnen einverstanden. Das
meiner „Verbrechen", wegen deren ich zu der „Guillo
Ausstoßung als eines Renegaten des Kommunismus

Facsimile extract from M. N. Roy's article 'Meine Verbrechen', *Gegen den Strom*, 1929



Die Krisis der Kommunistischen Internationale

Von Manabendra Nath Roy

I.

Das Problem der Führung.

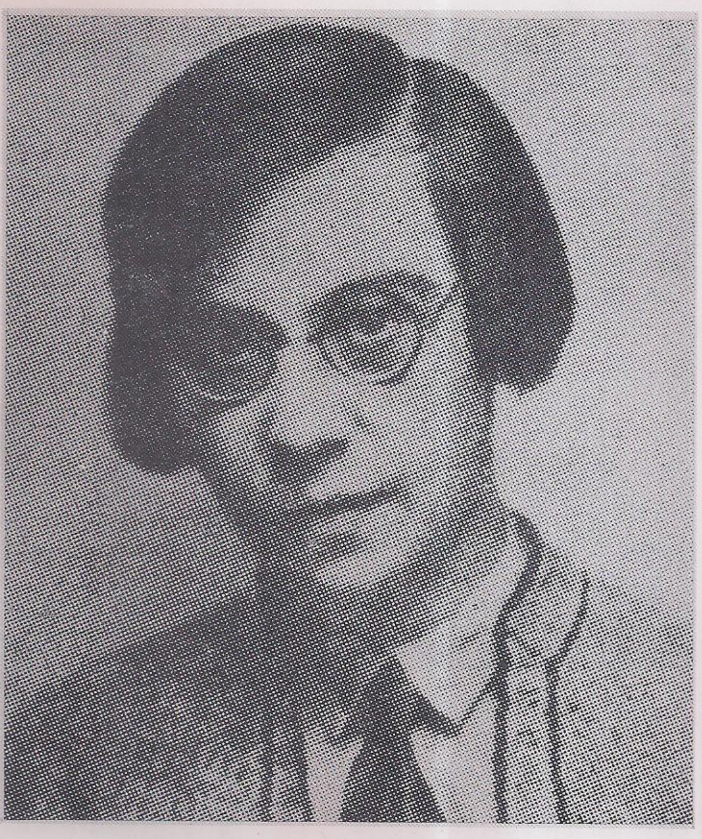
tz offiziellem Optimismus ist es eine beklagenswerte,
nehme und beunruhigende Tatsache, daß der Einfluß der
ktisch in jedem kapitalistischen Lande zurückgeht, — daß
letarischen Massen nicht für den Kommunismus gewonnen
. In den Augen der gegenwärtigen Führung bedeutet die
lung dieser Tatsache eine „rechte Abweichung", die einen
nden Glauben an die Revolution enthüllt. Die einfache
ung dieser Tatsache genügt, um als „Renegat" gebrand-
zu werden. Trotzdem ist in allererster Linie eine gründ-
lbstprüfung unsererseits dringend notwendig, um die Ur-
dieses Stillstandes, ja mehr, dieses Rückganges in der Ent-
g der kommunistischen Parteien zu finden. Diese Ursachen
aufgezeigt und ausgerottet werden; das ist die grund-
Bedingung für den Erfolg der revolutionären proletari-
ewegung. Der Rückgang des Einflusses der kommunisti-
arteien in den kapitalistischen Ländern, ihre Unfähigkeit,
Unterstützung der proletarischen Massen zu sichern,
s ist um so mehr beklagenswert, unangenehm und be-
end, weil es vor sich geht nicht in einer Periode der Flau-
ndern in einer Periode der allgemeinen (zwar langsamen,
heren) Radikalisierung der Arbeiterbewegung. Mit anderen
: gerade während die objektiven Bedingungen für den
der Revolution heranreifen, versagt der subjektive Fak-
em er der Situation nicht gewachsen ist.

nern wir uns der auffallendsten Tatsachen. In Deutsch-
r 3 Jahren wurden auf die Initiative der KP. über 14 Mil-
rbeiter in der Frage der Fürstenentschädigung mobilisiert.
darauffolgenden Parlamentswahlen gelingt es der KP.
ie gleiche Stimmenzahl wie 1924 zu erreichen. In der
reuzer-Kampagne, die den Parlamentswahlen folgt, kann
tei nicht die 1½ Millionen Stimmen aufbringen, die nötig
um einen Volksentscheid in dieser Frage zu verlangen.
ther sehen wir einen andauernden Prozeß des Nieder-

ist wirklich erschütternd. Nach den Berichten auf dem 6. W
kongreß hatte die KP. damals 150 000 Mitglieder. Auf
10. Plenum berichtet Pjatnitzki, daß diese Zahl auf 81 432 he
gesunken sei; d. h. die Mitgliedschaft verminderte sich im L
eines Jahres beinahe um die Hälfte! Tatsächlich ist die Situa
noch viel schlechter; — in Wirklichkeit beträgt die Mitglieder
der Partei nicht mehr als 30 000. Wenn die Parteien unfähig
ihre eigenen Mitglieder zu halten, um wieviel weniger kön
sie die Arbeiterklasse als Ganzes beeinflussen.

Der Verfall in China ist katastrophal. Die schwere Nie
lage 1927 hatte praktisch den Erfolg, daß die Partei als wirku
voller Faktor im politischen Leben des Landes ausgescha
wurde. Die Ausmaße des Rückganges kamen klar zum Ausd
in dem gegenwärtigen Konflikt wegen der Mandschurischen Ei
bahn. Die KP., welche während der revolutionären Jahre
1925 bis 1927 die ganze Situation beherrschte, ist nicht fä
irgendeinen Massenwiderstand gegen die antirussischen Ha
lungen zu organisieren, welche die nationalistische Bourge
als direktes Instrument des Imperialismus begeht. Sicherlic
das kein sehr rühmliches Zeugnis für eine Partei, die vor 2 Ja
noch die anerkannte Führerin von 2½ Millionen organisie
Arbeiter und beinahe 9 Millionen organisierter Bauern war!
Partei und ihre roten Gewerkschaften haben ihren Einfluß
die proletarischen Massen so vollständig verloren, daß die
vorschlägt, daß die Kommunisten in Zukunft illegal in den re
mistischen Gewerkschaften arbeiten sollen, welche seit der Nie
lage der Revolution unter bürgerlich-gegenrevolutionärer Führ
eingesetzt wurden. Die ganze Klassenzusammensetzung der Pa
hat sich verändert. Während im Sommer 1927 über 60 Pro
der Mitglieder Arbeiter aus den großen industriellen Zen
waren, ist gegenwärtig das Verhältnis höchstens 5 Pro
(Tsiu Chu-pao: „Internationale Pressekorrespondenz" Nr.
2. Juli 1929.) Es ist beinahe unglaublich; doch wenn wir
Quelle in Betracht ziehen, aus der diese Information stammt
ist anzunehmen, daß die Lage eher zu optimistisch eingesch
ist, als daß sie eine Unterschätzung darstellt.

Facsimile extract from M. N. Roy's article 'Die Krisis der K.I.' in *Gegen den Strom*, 1929



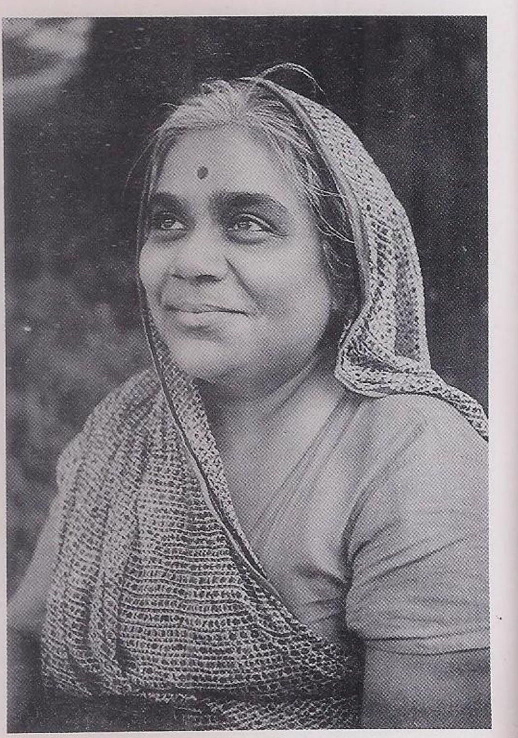
Ellen Gottschalk in Berlin, 1930

Ellen Gottschalk in Paris in the thirties

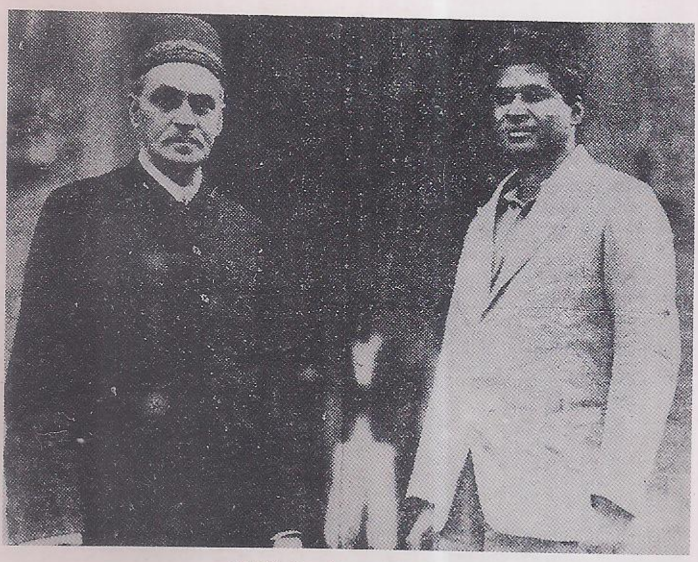
Tayab Shaikh

Brajesh Singh in the thirties

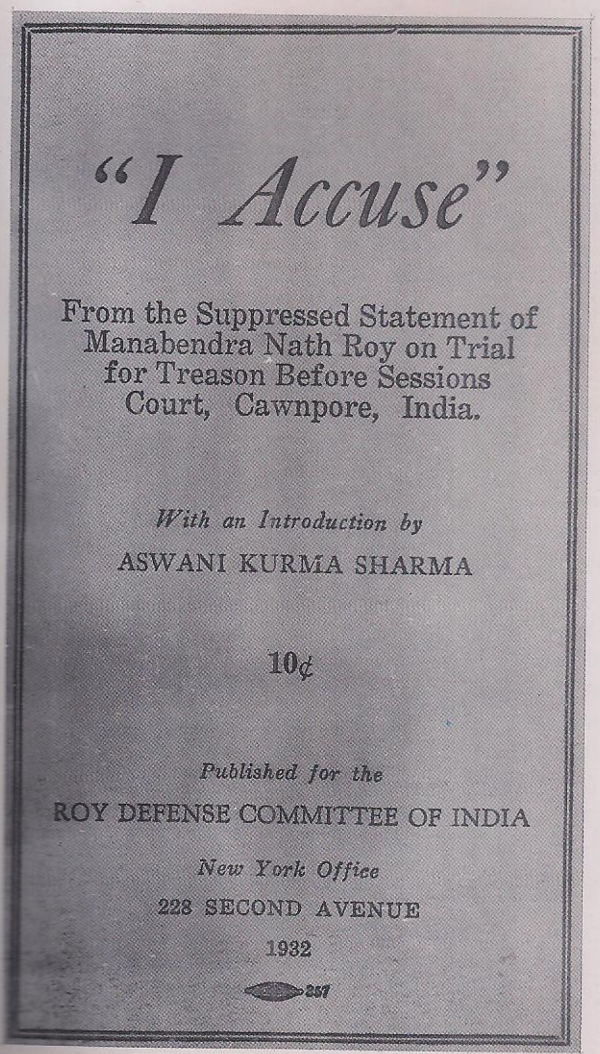
Anadi Bhaduri



Maniben Kara, Dehra Dun, 1936



M. N. Roy's arrest, 1931



"I Accuse"

From the Suppressed Statement of
Manabendra Nath Roy on Trial
for Treason Before Sessions
Court, Cawnpore, India.

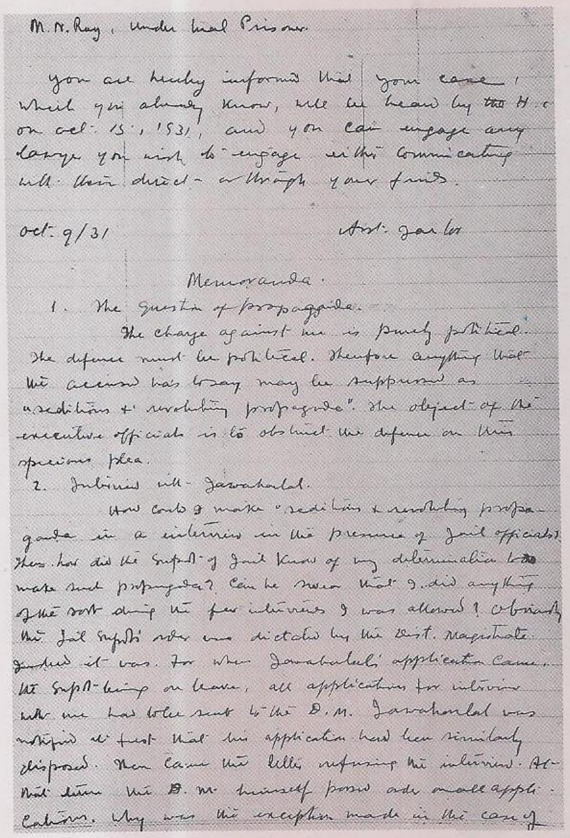
With an Introduction by
ASWANI KURMA SHARMA

10¢

Published for the
ROY DEFENSE COMMITTEE OF INDIA
New York Office
228 SECOND AVENUE
1932

257

Cover page of *I Accuse*, 1932



M. N. Roy, Under trial Prisoner

You are hereby informed that your case, which you already know, will be heard by the H. C. on oct. 15, 1931, and you can engage any lawyer you wish to engage either communicating with them direct or through your friends.

oct. 9/31 Asst. Jailor

Memoranda.

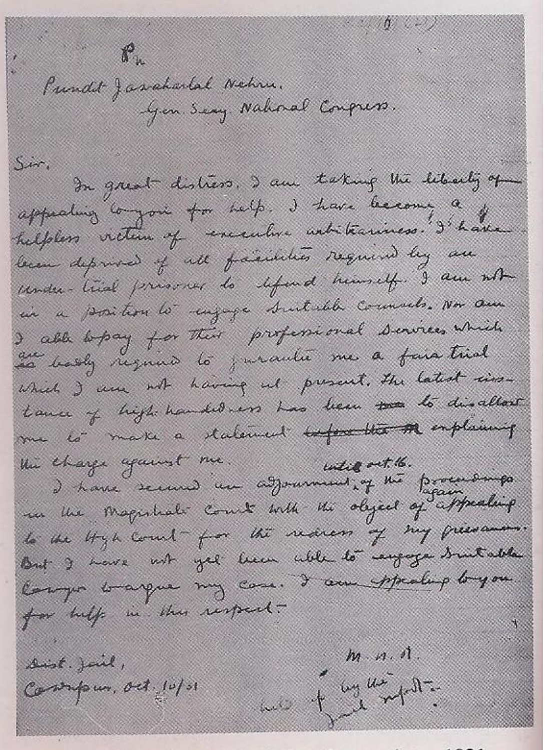
1. The question of propaganda.

The charge against me is purely political. The defence must be political. Therefore anything that the accused has to say may be suppressed as "seditious & revolutionary propaganda". The object of the executive officials is to obstruct the defence on this specious plea.

2. Interview with Jawaharlal.

How could I make "seditious & revolutionary propaganda in a interview in the presence of Jail officials? Then how did the Supdt. of Jail know of my determination to make such propaganda? Can he swear that I did anything of the sort during the few interviews I was allowed? Obviously the Jail Supdt's order was dictated by the Dist. Magistrate. Indeed it was. For when Jawaharlal's application came, the Supdt being on leave, all applications for interview with me had to be sent to the D. M. Jawaharlal was notified at first that his application had been similarly disposed. Then came the letter refusing the interview. At that time the D. M. himself passed order on all applications. Why was the exception made in the case of

M. N. Roy's prison memo, 1931



Pn

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru.
Gen. Secy National Congress.

Sir,

In great distress, I am taking the liberty of appealing to you for help. I have become a helpless victim of executive arbitrariness. I have been deprived of all facilities required by an under-trial prisoner to defend himself. I am not in a position to engage suitable counsels. Nor am I able to pay for their professional services which ~~so~~ are badly required to guarantee me a fair trial which I am not having at present. The latest instance of high-handedness has been ~~to~~ to disallow me to make a statement ~~before the M~~ explaining the charge against me.

I have secured an adjournment until oct. 16. of the proceedings in the Magistrate Court with the object of again appealing to the High Court for the redress of my grievances. But I have not yet been able to engage suitable lawyer to argue my case. I am appealing to you for help in this respect.

Dist. Jail,
Cawnpur, Oct. 10/31

M. N. R.

Withheld by the Jail Supdt.

M. N. Roy's letter to Nehru from prison, 1931 ernment, whilst it was the aim of the tactics of supporting the Labour Party to rid the masses of such an illusion. During this entire period, however, this opportunist policy was sanctioned by the Executive of the International. The diplomatic manoeuvres of the Anglo-Russian Committee, which presented an opportunist interpretation of the united-front tactics, did great damage to the Communist Party of England. The Russian comrades were responsible for this.

The British Communist Party was the favourite child of the international apparatus. Because of its successes, it had been praised as the model child of bolshevization for years. Although the Communist Party through correct bolshevik tactics could have made greater progress in England, the determining cause of its slow progress is not mistaken tactics. It is to be found in the peculiar nature of British capitalism and the particular characteristics of the workers' movement there which are quite apparent. It is not through chance that in the classic country of capitalism and the socialist idea, a social-democratic party of the usual type did not develop. Instead of drawing these complex lessons from experience, the leaders of the International lost their patience, rejected past policy, took a sharp turn, and resolved that the British communists, though numerically few, were to ram their heads against the massive wall which they had been unable to undermine. The International apparatus forced the leaders of the Party to accept the new policy against their own judgement. But the new policy works no better than the old one. If the one was opportunistic, the other is adventurist, and the leaders of the International are responsible for both. Under the given conditions of the workers' movement in England, the policy of organizing new unions can only be an adventure.

The influence which the Party had gained during the years of conflict is soon lost. A clear sign of this is the inability of the communists to give organized expression to the dissatisfaction of the masses with the openly treacherous policy of the Labour Government. The lack of any organized resistance against the overt anti-working-class policy of the Labour Government is also proof of the completely erroneous evaluation of the international situation by the 6th Congress *even in the case of a country where capitalism is indeed in decline*. Even there the radicalization of the masses is not such as to drive them 'onto the barricades'. Nonetheless the few thousand communists are handed the task of conducting mass-battles for the *immediate* acquisition of power. The only result of such senseless tactics is that left-radicalism is again rearing its ugly head.

This tragic process will continue as long as the Communist International does not have the courage to make a dialectical study of the history of evolution of the proletarian Revolution. The relationship of the Russian section with the rest of the International has to be brought on to a reasonable basis. The Russian section which is no longer able to provide the ideological and political leadership ought not to hang on to its dominating position by other means. If the bold thrust of the Red Army was unable in the past to hasten the development of the Revolution in the West, then the inspiration of the five-year plan will not be more successful in accomplishing this miracle if the subjective and objective conditions for gaining state-power by the proletariat are unfavourable in the capitalist countries. The material aid from Russia was initially a great impulse for the communist movement. Now, controlling the purse gives power and authority to people who do not merit to be any more than the first among equals. Therefore, the money of the Communist International prevents its development today. As such, it is not a political problem, but it has serious political consequences. During the recent process of the tragic 'bolshevization' of a number of parties (e.g. the Czech, American, Swedish, etc.) the financial means of the international apparatus played a deciding role. The ability to stand on their own feet financially will also be *a condition of true bolshevization* of the sections of the Communist International. For the more the masses are convinced that the Communist Party fight for their interests, the more ready they will be to make material sacrifices in order to assist the Party.*

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* On page 8 of this issue of *Gegen den Strom* was published an inset carrying the following editorial note:

> The Presidium of the EKKI has now formally resolved the exclusion of Comrade Manabendra Nath Roy from the Comintern. However, already prior to this resolution Kuusinen and suchlike champions of the Comintern apparatus treated Comrade Roy as being outside the Party—a singular scandal.
>
> The *Red Flag* performed a particularly knavish act in the manner it published Roy's exclusion. It wrote under the caption 'Mister (!) Roy expelled': 'The British conservative press which has the best connections with Scotland Yard (English political secret police), has published the expulsion of "Mister Roy" with unconcealed regret in a prominent place.'
>
> Comrade Roy has occupied for many years the most responsible position in the Comintern. The added insinuation is all the worse as the editors of the *Red Flag* are doing it in a perfidious and cowardly manner.

The first official announcement of Roy's expulsion from the Comintern was published in *Inprecor*, IX, 69, 13 December 1929. According to the announcement, the decision was taken 'in accordance with the resolution of the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI' (3–19 July 1929). In fact, *Gegen den Strom* had itself published the news of Roy's expulsion in its issue of 7 September 1929 (No. 36, p.7).

Highlighting of words and parts of sentences in the original German text has been retained in translation through italicization. SNR.

VII. The Problem of the Communist Party of England*

1. *Party Congress of the Communist Party of England*

In no other leading capitalist country than in England has the development of the Communist Party progressed so slowly in spite of it being the country where capitalism has declined steadily. The new tactical guidelines introduced at the beginning of January 1928 were not designed to improve the position of the Communist Party of England. On the contrary, the number of party members which had risen to almost 10,000 during the lock-out in the mines, dropped to an all-time low of 2500. At the parliamentary elections this spring the Party suffered a lamentable failure. The result of the recently held municipal elections was even worse. In spite of these facts which revealed the sad weakness of the Party, the Party Congress held last week approved by an overwhelming majority the 'new lines' according to which the immediate tasks of the Party are 1. leading the political mass-fight against the Labour government; 2. mobilizing the masses to fight for the 'revolutionary workers' government'. A Party discussion took place before the Congress. The main feature of this discussion was the chase after the 'right peril'. However, it became apparent that this peril is difficult to grasp in the Communist Party of England. Those who were accused of a rightist deviation and sabotage of the 'new line' participated themselves in hunting down the 'right peril'. Even Comrade Rothstein, who had been expelled some time ago from the Politbureau as leader of the right wing, wrote on the eve of the Congress in the official organ of the Party that 'rightist errors are unpardonable during the current period.' On the day of the Congress he spoke in the same vein. But it was all in vain. He was not re-elected to the new Central Committee. The campaign against the 'right peril' in the Communist Party of England, which developed into such a comedy, nevertheless had to have its booty in order to appear justified. The ECCI apparatus succeeded in forcing all those who think differently onto the 'new line'. There was only one exception—Horner, who openly stood by his conviction and went down fighting. He warned the Party Congress that 'the Party should diligently take care not to turn into a leadership without an army.' While declaring that he disagreed with the policy of founding new 'revolutionary unions', Horner, who had been the most prominent unionist of the Communist Party of England, said: 'As long as the majority of workers are in the old unions, we must remain within these and must not run away to form new unions because we are offended.' In contrast to Horner, the other prominent Communist unionist, Pollitt, who had also fallen under suspicion of being a personification of the 'right peril', capitulated. At the Party Congress, Pollitt read the political report of the Central Committee, that is, he appeared as the defender of the 'new line'. At the Party discussions held shortly beforehand Pollitt had been attacked initially. Today the whole Party seems to be mobilized against the 'right peril' which has thus been reduced to an abstract term. Everybody fights vigorously against something which is not defended by anybody. Such strange things can only happen in England—the classic country of opportunism.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 52, pp. 8–10, 28 Dec. 1929. Both in the original German title and text of this article the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) is called the Communist Party of England (Kommunistischen Partei Englands = KPE). SNR.

In an atmosphere so abnormal which dominated the Party Congress of the C.P. of England it was impossible to deal seriously with all the problems facing the Party. Not a few comrades concealed their inner convictions behind radical phrases. Fear of the ECCI-apparatus drove them to this. It was revealed clearly in the discussion at the Congress. A closer examination of the speeches made by some of the leading comrades shows that their approval of the 'new line' is superficial. It further discloses that the Party has a very poor understanding of the problems facing it. Nevertheless, a party which has only a couple of thousand members and 'absolutely no contacts in the factories' (Pollitt's report at the Congress) is driven into the adventure of power-struggle by the international leadership. This will surely not contribute to the development of a communist mass Party in England, but rather destroy the little which has been achieved.

2. *The Leadership of the CPE and the 'new line'*

The objective conditions in England are very favourable for the development of a communist mass Party. The acknowledgement of errors committed by the Party-leaders is a welcome subjective factor which also serves this development. The internal life of the Party is in motion. The former stagnation has been broken. There is in the Party no clear, crystallized right or left line. Frequently we notice in one and the same comrade deviations from the course in the one or other direction. From the beginning Pollitt was an enthusiastic follower of the 'new line' as formulated at the 9th Plenum of the ECCI. When the international apparatus resolved to break the resistance of the so-called rightist leaders (Campbell, Rothstein, Bell, etc.) Pollitt was chosen as the future man. Suddenly, at the 10th Plenum he adopted a stance which caused suspicion that he was 'moving to the right'. All the calculations of the international apparatus were upset by this somersault of Pollitt's. But in his supposed madness there was method. The main content of the 'new line'—the foundation of new unions—was not clearly recognizable initially. As an active unionist Pollitt took a critical position *vis-à-vis* the 'new line' when its true essential point emerged at the 6th Congress. He is now completing another turn, yet a critical examination of his speech at the Congress discloses that he is not wholeheartedly with it. Another example is Murphy.[18] During the whole period he was a passionate defender of the 'new line' and a candidate for Party leadership. He ruthlessly uncovered 'rightist' deviations' in everyone. In September of this year Murphy proposed that the communists should make concrete demands at the coming conference of the Labour Party. The secretariat of the central committee, which consisted of comrades accused of representing rightist opportunism, charged Murphy with rightist deviation because of this proposal. In defence of his proposal Murphy explained that the 'rightist' secretariat was falling into an ultra-left deviation by refusing to make partial demands. These are not isolated cases. They characterize the situation in the entire Party. The leading Party-cadre has detached itself from the former opportunist tradition. However, it was not clear about the line to follow. The recognition of mistakes committed will be useless for the party if it becomes the starting point for new mistakes in the opposite direction. And just that is happening today in the Communist Party of England.

Until now the leadership of the Communist Party of England was not an ideal one; however, the main reason for its retardation is not to be found solely in the poor leadership. It rests in the specific situation of the country and, determined by it, the peculiar traditions and the structure of the labour movement. Indeed, even the shortcomings of the leadership of the Communist Party of England themselves are to be attributed to the specific circumstances of the country. Comrade Rothstein indicated the deepest root of the illness when he wrote on the eve of the Party Congress in *Workers Life* that the cause of the 'right peril in the Communist Party of England' is to be sought in the reigning bourgeois influence within the labour movement. In the same way did a delegate at the Party Congress indicate the kernel of the problem when he claimed 'that the whole Party is suffering internally from rightist deviations—and that is so because of the past'.

3. *The Peculiar Features of the English Workers' Movement and the Development of the Communist Party of England*

In all leading capitalist countries the germ of Communist Parties developed in the shadow of social democracy. The evolution of the Communist Party was necessarily restricted by the fact that in England a social-democratic party of the classical type never came into being. Whilst in other countries social-democratic parties fought against the bourgeois traditions within the working class, the Labour Party in England was born as the organ of the renewed bourgeois radicalism (Fabianism). Those who lightly talk about radicalization of the masses in England should first of all realize that in no other capitalist country is class-consciousness so low among the working masses as in this country of the classical capitalist development and class struggle. Undoubtedly a process of radicalization is occurring; but there is no intensification of class-consciousness among the masses. There exists strong dissatisfaction with the given situation, and the process of radicalization is expressed in that the workers are discontented about the so long delayed introduction of reforms promised by the Labour Party. That means that the process of radicalization is still only a striving for reform. It does not express the will for a revolutionary struggle.

The sectional strikes, which give expression to the still not all-encompassing dissatisfaction of the workers, do not touch directly the question of political power, as little as did the big strikes in the past. They are not an indication of the maturing of the condition for 'political mass-strikes against the Labour Government', that is against the parliamentary democracy. The belief of the English worker in parliamentary government is more than an illusion; it is a firmly-rooted superstition. The possibility of other forms of government was never considered in the whole history of the English Labour movement. Growing up under the guardianship of bourgeois liberalism the English trade union movement went hand in hand with parliamentary cretinism. Occasional occurrences of protest movements were ineffective anarcho-syndicalist outbursts which refused any political activity. Never in its history has the English Labour movement established a political perspective which did not include parliamentary government or did not take heed of the power of the state. In so far as the current dissatisfaction of the masses does not overcome the traditional political retardation, it is not a sign of a revolutionary crisis.

Opportunism has always been a feature of English political life. Growing up against such a background, the Communist Party of England has been unable from the beginning to completely rid itself of the influences of tradition. In England the communists did not inherit the tradition of a long period of class struggle carried out under the banner of social democracy. Under these circumstances it was the primary task of the Communist International to contribute to the education of a cadre of the proletarian revolution. The task was begun under Lenin's leadership; he recommended a line appropriate for the specific circumstances of the workers' movement of England. The forces which originally contributed to the education of the Communist Party of England were all weak and immature—without political experience and Marxist schooling. The Social-Democratic Federation led by Hyndman never did become a factor in the political life of England.[19] It never grew beyond the limitations of a propagandist group. Therefore, those elements who broke off from the mother-organization during the war in the struggle against Hyndman's chauvinism, brought to the subsequently created Communist Party only an opportunist tradition and the narrow horizon of a propaganda-sect. On the other hand, the new forces that grew up out of the mass upheaval of 1918/1919 represented a strongly anarcho-syndicalist direction. A third group came from the Socialist Labour Party, a small sect that preached a pedantic exposition of the theories of Marx. In consequence of the historical defects of social democracy the newly grown forces embodying an anarcho-syndicalist tendency formed the most outstanding factor in the direction of communism in England. In consideration of this factor Lenin formulated the tactical line of the young Communist Party of England. Anarchist sectarianism, syndicalist romanticism and *petit bourgeois* anti-parliamentarianism had to be overcome before the route towards communism could be found. But the tactical line, which was so vital for the development of the entire communist movement, galvanized at the same time in a part of the movement the dying tradition of opportunism. The former followers of Hyndman approved enthusiastically the tactical line recommended by Lenin but gave it a wrong interpretation just because of their opportunist tradition. In their hands it became the purpose of these tactics to support the Labour Party 'to drive it into revolutionary battle with capitalism'. Therefore, the policy failed the original true purpose, namely, the liberation of the masses from the tradition of parliamentary cretinism. On the other hand, cured of the infantile disorder of left communism, the new forces displayed an inclination to go too far in the other direction.

Exactly those arguments on which the 'new line' was grounded, showed how wrongly the old policy had been understood and utilized. Comrade Thomas Bell is a typical member of the 'Old Guard'.[20] Risen from the socialist workers party he knows all three volumes of *Das Kapital* by heart, and therefore he has been one of the leading theorists of the Party since its foundation. Suspected himself of rightist deviations, he participates enthusiastically in the chase after the 'right peril'. In the latest issue of the theoretical organ of the Party he writes on 'The Crisis in our Party and the Way out'. Here he explains *inter alia*: 'The old tactics of establishing a united front from above has become impossible. We now must organize the fight of the workers against union bureaucracy and the Labour Party, that is against the social-fascist machine. Cease flirting with the 'left' leaders.' In these few brief and clearly formulated sentences the whole history of the past is told. The communist tactics of supporting the Labour Party was interpreted and executed as a 'measure of the united front from above'. The solemn declaration that from now on the fight of the workers against union bureaucracy etc. should be organized means that the previous tactics were in opposition to this, namely, going along with them, in agreement with them to organize the fight—to compel them to revolutionary fight. That was obviously a mistaken, if not opportunist, interpretation of the tactical line recommended by Lenin.

The significance of that tactical line did not lie in that one could force Macdonald to fight King and Parliament, or convert Purcell to become the propaganda-tool of communism. However, not having been used exclusively as a means for the realization of the communist programme, it created such illusions. Indeed, the so very radical-sounding principal motto of the new line, 'revolutionary Workers' Government' has the same old defects. What are workers to imagine from this motto, workers who have never been enlightened about the possibility of a government without parliament? Quite logically (they would imagine), a Labour Government (of course with a parliament and Macdonald) with a revolutionary programme, at best with Murphy in place of Macdonald. All the mistakes of the past have to be attributed chiefly to the fact that the Communist Party of England never had its own programme which gave consideration to the specific position of the country. Even today it does not have such a programme. Instead, it is driven into the dead-end road of anarcho-syndicalism which has always been the antithesis to reformism in England.

4. *The Content of the 'new line' in England*

The new line was contained in the Congress cry: 'Class against Class'. But to organize the working class in the fight against the bourgeoisie is not a new policy of the Communist Party. The Communist Party came into being so as to pursue this policy. The particular emphasis on this fundamental principle of the policy of the Communist

Party—its proclamation made now with such trumpet blasts—signals the admission that so far this principle had been neglected.

However, a scapegoat has to be found if one wishes to hold the leaders of the Communist Party of England solely responsible for this opportunistic interpretation of the tactical line formulated by Lenin. That is characteristic of the current leadership of the Comintern. Because of traditions of opportunism, ideological retardation and political inexperience, the possibility existed at least that the British communists were unable to correctly carry out the Leninist tactics. It was the task of the International to help them in this matter. However, that did not happen. All the errors which the leadership of the Communist Party of England committed had the approval and sanction of the International. Indeed the crudest offences in the employment of the Leninist united-front tactic occurred in some instances under the very initiative of the International leadership. When examining the problems of the Communist Party of England one cannot leave unmentioned the tragic experience of the Anglo-Russian committee. When Zinoviev was in opposition he demanded of course the dissolution of this organ of ineffectual diplomatic dealings. But previously as President of the Comintern he went so far as to declare at one of the World Congresses that Purcell and Hicks could possibly be the tools by means of which the English proletariat could be won over to communism.[21] How could one expect of the young, frail and small Communist Party of England to hold fast to the Leninist tactical line when the Russian leaders of the International continued diplomatic negotiations with the English union bureaucrats even after their shameless betrayal during the General Strike of 1926? Only after the Anglo-Russian committee had been discarded by the English side, did the Russian leaders of the International discover suddenly that something was wrong within the Communist Party of England. Until then the leadership of the Communist Party of England had the complete approval of the International. Even their serious mistakes in connection with the General Strike were sanctioned by not being sharply condemned by the ECCI. The ECCI tolerated the policy of the 'Old Guard' which prevented the influx of new blood into the Party leadership. After the belated discovery was made that the leadership of the Communist Party of England was not an ideal one, the Russian leaders went to the other extreme and forced the 'new line' (which represents an ultra-left departure from the Leninist tactics) on the Communist Party.

The core of the 'new line' is not a change in tactics *vis-à-vis* the Labour Party. The relationship between the Communist Party and the Labour Party cannot remain on the same basis as in 1920. The events from 1920 to 1926, which reached their peak in the betrayal of the General Strike, demanded certain changes in the communist tactics towards the Labour Party. The Communist Party must act no longer as the left wing of the Labour Party as was the case in 1926. It would be wrong to continue the former tactics of the Party in seeking to join the Labour Party when the latter was already preparing the expulsion of the communists from all its organs. In this matter the resolution of the IXth Plenum still contains certain right tendencies. But the 'new line' took on a positively dangerous form when the resolutions of the VIth World Congress of the Communist International and the IVth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions made unavoidable its expansion into the area of union-policy. Lenin recommended to the British communists that they join the Labour Party and operate inside it just because the Labour Party is constructed on the basis of unions. The new line does not mean a departure from Leninist tactics in what it proposes in regard to election tactics, but in the vital matter of union policy. The new line, as it was established eventually at the Xth Plenum of the ECCI, and as forced upon the Party at its recent Congress, is an open call to establish 'revolutionary unions'.

5. *The Beginning of Resistance to the 'new line'*

Those comrades, who until recently had been opposed as representing the 'right peril' and who had resisted the new line until they finally capitulated before the almighty ECCI apparatus, were worried about just that essential characteristic. In the concluding declaration of its party discussion the secretariat of the central committee states the following: 'The Comintern has repeatedly rejected the thesis that the majority of workers can be won over to communism through the creation of new unions parallel to the reformist ones as long as these workers still belong to the latter'. These comrades, who are of this opinion as expressed in the stated declaration, are basically against the new line, although under pressure from the ECCI apparatus they join in the mad chorus against the 'right peril' and announce their resolution 'to lead the masses against the armed forces of capitalism into the streets' (Gallacher at the Party Congress). The secretariat attempted to restrict his declaration by defining the conditions under which new unions may be founded: 1. When such large numbers of workers would be expelled by the bureaucracy from the reformist unions, that the respective branch of an industry is indeed no longer organized; and 2. when 'we have won the masses in the factories, have led them in fights, have isolated the union-bureaucracy and have unmasked the rottenness of these bureaucratic administrations.' By this definition of the conditions the new line is practically rejected in its essential content. For, when the second of the specific conditions has been fulfilled, founding new unions will no longer be on the agenda; the agenda will be the conquest of power. In any case, it will no longer be a matter of organizing new unions because the former will be completely under communist leadership. With regard to the first condition however, it is highly improbable that such a situation will ever come about. After thus rejecting the new line in essence the secretariat formulates the immediate task of the Party as follows:

> The immediate task of the Party consists in preparing such a programme with which to reach the masses and which will enable the Party to win their support. . . . The discussion displayed a tendency to leave out of consideration the problems immediately before the Party and to occupy itself with the less immediate matter—under which conditions shall new unions be founded.

This profound disagreement with the new line did not find any other expression at the Congress, except through Horner. But it is simply impossible to reconcile such radically divergent viewpoints overnight. Therefore, the victory which the new line gained at the Party Congress is a superficial one. It does not express the true situation within the Party. Some leading comrades could not quite mask their true conviction although they stood for the new line at the Party Congress. Comrade Campbell, for instance, once the leader of the opposition, made the following remark in sharp contradiction to the general direction of his talk on the economic battle. He said:

> There is the danger that we leap from the one extreme of a position of 'practical demands' to that of empty phrases. . . . It is wrong of communists to say to the workers at municipal and other elections that they must not expect anything from these bodies. That is not communism, but nonsense.

Comrade Bell supported the whole programme—political mass strikes, foundation of new unions and revolutionary workers' government; nonetheless he could not avoid giving an insight into his true feelings when he remarked: 'But we must at the same time beware of those who, to hide their own incompetence, thrash out left phrases which will not lead anywhere.'

This reveals that the 'right peril' in the Communist Party of England has not been converted to the approval of the new line as completely as appears to be the case. Not being adapted to the conditions of the country and its workers' movement, the new line is bound to produce resistance. Else the perspective of the development of the Communist Party of England would be indeed discouraging. If there is no resistance against this ultra-left adventure of the new line, then the Communist Party of England will be completely destroyed.

Notes

[1] According to Piatnitsky's organizational report at the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI (July 1929), membership of the respective Communist Parties had fallen between 1925 and 1929 from 139,000 to 81,500 in Czechoslovakia, from 68,000 to 46,000 in France, and from 10,700 (in 1926) to 4,000 in Great Britain. *Xe Session du Comite Executif de l'Internationale Communiste*, Paris, 1929. Trotsky maintained that the decline in France was much more dramatic—from 83,000 in 1925 to 35,000 party members in 1929, and from 475,000 in 1926 to 375,000 in 1928 in the membership of the Confederation Generale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU). Decline in CPGB membership was also greater than officially reported. Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. III, p. 42.

[2] During the twenties the Russian dominance over the Comintern was much resented and, to a lesser or greater extent, resisted by many non-Russian Communist leaders and several Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union. But the Comintern depended for its very existence and functioning on Russian funds, and that made it altogether vulnerable to manipulation by the *apparatchiki*. Ossip Piatnitsky, efficient and ruthless manager of the apparatus (from 1924 to 1934, according to Franz Borkenau), laid it down very categorically at the Organization Conference of the Sections of the Communist International and the Communist Youth International which was held on the occasion of the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI (March–April 1925) that 'the Russian form of party organization must be the model for other countries' and 'democratic centralism' was as much the basis of the Comintern as of the Bolshevik Party. 'The Model Statutes for a Communist Party', drafted by the Orgbureau, were ratified at this Plenum by the ECCI. *Der Organisatorische Aufbau der Kommunistischen Partei*, 1925. Also see *Bolshevizing the Communist International*, London, CPGB, 1925; and *Inprekorr* V, 77–80; 83. In his speech at the Plenum Kuusinen specifically attacked Thalheimer and Kreibich (Czechoslovakia) for making the charge that 'the Russian leaders of the Comintern wanted to get rid of the independent people in the leadership of the western parties in order to be able to control those parties from Moscow'. Also *see* Victor Serge, *From Lenin to Stalin*, London, 1937; Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901–1941*, London, 1963.

[3] At the Sixth Plenum of the ECCI (17 Feb.–15 March 1926), the militant Italian Communist A. Bordiga had made a bitterly critical four-hour speech in which he highlighted the basic differences in the historical setting and organizational structure between the Russian and the European Communist Parties. He strongly protested against the imposition of the Russian model on the other sections of the Comintern, and argued that the current failures and shortcomings of the Russian party might be remedied only by the 'united efforts of a general staff of World Revolution drawn from all communist parties'. Bordiga was denounced by Thaelmann, Ercoli (Togliatti) and Zinoviev. ***Protokoll** : Erweiterte Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, 17 Februar bis 15 Marz 1926*, Hamburg, 1926.

An unsigned article in *The Communist International* (March 1926) named Souvarine, Levi, Thalheimer, Hoeglund, Maslow, Korsch, Katz and Bordiga as persons who had attempted to put 'European Communism' in opposition to 'Russian Leninism'.

[4] A. Martynov (or Martinoff) represented the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party, held in July–August 1903 under the chairmanship of Plekhanov, first in Brussels and then in London. He vigorously attacked the view of the nature and role of the Party which had been propounded by Lenin in *What is to be Done*, and he emphasized the role of economic factors and proletarian 'spontaneity'. At the Stockholm 'unity' Congress (April 1906) he again argued against the Leninist idea of a conspiratorial party of professional revolutionaries; instead, a Social Democratic Workers' Party, in his view, should 'stir bourgeois democracy to political life, push it forward and radicalize bourgeois democracy'. At the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI (July 1929), however, Martynov echoed the new ultra-left line that social-democracy was a greater danger than fascism. At the Thirteenth Plenum (December 1933)

he was even more emphatic in asserting 'the unalterably irreconcilable attitude in principle of the Comintern towards Social Democracy', and as late as 1934, when he was editor of *Communist International*, he defended the Comintern's unresponsiveness to the proposal from the Second International for joint action against fascism.

E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol, I; Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. III.

[5] P. Milyukov was Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Provisional Government of 1917. At the session of the Central Committee of the CPSU on 23 April 1929 Bukharin was severely condemned in a resolution moved by Stalin; it was decided to remove him from all work in the Comintern; the decision was confirmed at the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI. *Inprecorr*, IX, 45; 30 Aug. 1929.

[6] On 30 September 1928 Bukharin published in *Pravda* a long article, 'Notes of an Economist: At the Beginning of the Economic Year'; the article was prominently featured in *Inprekorr* (Nos 117, 118, 119; 16, 19, 22 Oct. 1928). Later Bukharin was accused of having published the article without the knowledge of the Central Committee. In this article Bukharin warned against the growing disparity between industrial and agricultural development in the Soviet Union. There was 'a famine of industrial goods and a shortage of grain' while there was a huge growth of industrial production and capital construction. 'The greatest sustained advance is achieved when industry develops on a basis provided by a rapidly-growing agriculture.' He advocated the development of agriculture through cooperatives, Sovkhozy and Kolkhozy and reduction of 'the overstrain in capital expenditure', and severely criticized both Gosplan and Vesenkha (Supreme Council of the National Economy). The article was seen as a manifesto of the non-Trotskyist Opposition in the CPSU.

A. I. Rykov succeeded Lenin as Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars; M. P. Tomsky was the leading trade unionist. On 30 January 1929 Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky presented a statement at the joint session of the Politbureau and the Presidium of the Control Commission in which they argued that 'the Sovkhozy and Kolkhozy could not in the near future become the *basic source* of grain supplies, and that dependence on individual peasant households would continue for a long time to come'. This statement came later to be known as the Platform. Rykov presented a set of draft Theses on the Five Yeat Plan in which he called for a Special Two Year Plan 'to remove existing disproportions between agriculture and other sectors of the economy'. Rykov's Theses were rejected by the Politbureau. At the meeting of the Party Central Committee which preceded the Sixteenth Party Conference (April 1929) the lines between the Stalinists and the Bukharinists were sharply drawn, but the proceedings were treated as secret. E. H. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926–29*, Vols. 1 and 2.

[7] Thus, among the expelled in 1928–9 were Jilek, Muna, Neurath (Czechoslovakia), Serra, Rossi, Tasca (Italy), Humbert-Droz (Switzerland), Walcher, Froelich, Enderle, Brandler, Thalheimer (Germany), Lovestone, Gitlow and Wolfe (USA), Spector (Canada), Kilbom, Samuelsson and Flyg (Sweden), Erling Falk (Norway), etc. In France, 'by 1928 practically all leaders apt to display independence, such as Frossard, Souvarine, Loriot, Monatte, Suzann Girault, Treint, Paz, etc. had been excluded'. Borkenau, op. cit., p. 335. *Also* Jules Humbert-Droz, *Memoires Vol 2 : De Lenine a Staline : Dix Ans au Service de l'Internationale Communiste*, Neuchatel, 1971.

[8] *Protokoll : 10 Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale*, 1929. Since 1928, V. Molotov, called 'stone bottom' by the Old Guard, had emerged with Stalin's backing as the 'theorist' of the new line, and at the Tenth Plenum he led the attack on Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky.

[9] At the Second Congress of the Comintern Amadeo Bordiga had submitted a set of draft theses proclaiming that the communists *on principle* should abstain totally from Parliament and parliamentary politics; the theses were rejected. A militant leftist, Bordiga led the split in the Italian Socialist Party and the formation of the Communist Party of Italy in

1921. At the Fifth Comintern Congress (June–July 1924) he was elected a member of the ECCI, but he kept challenging the overriding authority of the Russian Party. He was censored, suspended and eventually expelled in March 1930.

[10] The revised Statutes of the C. I. adopted at the Fifth Congress very unambiguously spelled out its centralist structure. 'The ECCI . . . issues binding directives to all parties and organizations affiliated to the C. I. and supervises their activities' (Article Eleven). The Statutes were further revised at the Sixth Congress to ensure total control of the C. I. by the Political Secretariat. *Protokoll: Fuenfter Kongress der K. I.*, 1924; *Protokoll des 6 Weltkongresses der K. I.*, 1928.

[11] For an overview of the splits and expulsions, Borkenau, op. cit., Chap. XX, 'The Leap into the Abyss', pp.332–56; for many particulars, Degras, op. cit., Vols.II and III; Ruth Fischer, op. cit.; H. Weber, ed., *Der Deutsche Kommunismus : Dokumente*, Cologne, 1963; G. Walter, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Francais*, Paris, 1948.

[12] According to official figures urban membership of the Bolshevik Party in 1922 was 314,000, and rural membership 201,000. In 1927 the respective figures were 840,000 and 307,000. The largest urban units of the Party were at Moscow (123,000 members) and Leningrad (93,000). On 1 January 1928 Workers constituted 37.6 per cent of party membership, peasants 14.4 per cent, employees in 'Soviet, Party, Trade Union, Cooperative and other institutions and organizations' 31.9 per cent. Distribution of USSR population by classes in 1926–7 was: (a) Proletarian Non-Agricultural 26.7 million, (b) Proletarian Agricultural 5.8 million, (c) Poor Peasant 22.4 million, (d) Middle Peasant 76.7 million, (e) Kulak 4.9 million, (f) remainder 10.9 million. E. H. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy 1920–29*, Vol. 2, Chap. 42, 'The Party Framework', Table Nos. 52 and 68; also p. 108.

[13] Lenin wrote *Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* in April 1920, shortly before the Second Congress of the Comintern. Lenin's fierce attack on 'Leftism' which claimed to stand on pure principle, and his arguments in support of 'compromises not created by the Communists but by the course of history' had a profound influence on the tactics and behaviour of the Comintern and every Communist Party. For a left wing critique of Lenin, Hermann Gorter, *Offener Brief au Genossen Lenin*, Amsterdam, 1921.

[14] 'The Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the CI', drafted by Bukharin, but severely amended by the Russian delegation, propounded the theory that after the war there was the First Period of 'extremely acute crisis of the capitalist system and of direct revolutionary action on the part of the proletariat'; that after the defeat of the German uprising of 1923 began the Second Period 'of gradual and partial stabilization of the capitalist system'; and now history has entered the Third Period leading 'inevitably to the most severe intensification of the general capitalist crisis'. *Protokoll des 6 Weltkongresses*. However, while both Bukharin and Stalin advocated the theory of the Third Period, they 'put on it two mutually exclusive interpretations'. To Stalin it 'meant the approach of a new revolutionary era' and justified an extreme left turn in Comintern's policy. To Bukharin, it meant a renewed effort by capitalism to overcome its crisis, and ultra-leftism was no answer. Franz Borkenau, op. cit., pp. 336–9.

[15] The German uprising of October 1923 was forced on a reluctant KPD leadership by Moscow and crushed in no time. The swift action of the Reichswehr and the armed police force, the rising tide of nationalism, and the unpreparedness of the communists made the failure of the uprising inevitable and absolute.

Franz Borkenau, op. cit., chap. XIV 'Germany in 1923'; Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, 'The Communist Uprising of 1923', pp. 291–383; O. K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, Offenbach, 1948; A. Thalheimer, *1923: Eine verpasste Revolution?*

[16] In 1924 the founder-leader of the Communist Party of Sweden, Z. Hoegland, who was also a member of the ECCI, had been expelled for refusing to follow the line laid down by the Fifth Congress of the Comintern. His successors to the leadership of the Swedish CP, Karl Kilbom, Oskar Samuelsson and Nils Flygg, proved to be no less independent and

intractable. The Swedish Party did not depend for its funds on Moscow. Its membership grew from 7,011 in 1924 to 18,000 in 1929. In the 1928 elections to the Swedish Parliament it received 151,567 votes. It controlled about 20 per cent of the labour movement.

The Swedish Party pledged its loyalty to the Comintern but consistently refused to be subservient to Moscow. Its leaders were personally close to Bukharin. At the Sixth Congress the leadership was severely attacked, and after the Tenth Plenum the ECCI Presidium addressed a long 'Open Letter' to the members of the Swedish CP criticizing 'the opportunist errors' of its leaders. The ECCI now started its campaign against the Swedish leadership which then convened a Party Congress in November 1929. This was overruled by the ECCI which sent its delegation to Sweden for taking over the Party. Kilbom, Samuelsson and Flygg were deposed and expelled, and a Stalinist named Hugo Sillen put up in their place. The Party split, about 7000 members stayed with Kilbom and his group, and about 4000 went over to the Moscow-backed Party. The Communist Opposition in Sweden did reasonably well in the first half of the thirties, but declined and disintegrated after 1936.

A. F. Upton, *The Communist Parties of Scandinavia and Finland*, London, 1973; E. Karas, 'The Swedish Party Against the "New Course" ', *Revolutionary Age*, Feb. 1930; R. J. Alexander, *The Right Opposition*, Greenwood Press, 1981; Jane Degras, op. cit., Vol. 3.

[17] In the ECCI report to the Seventh Plenum (Nov.-Dec. 1926) the Communist Party of Great Britain had been highly praised; during 1926 its membership was reported to have risen from 6,000 to 12,000. However, the majority of the CPGB Central Committee had strong reservations regarding the ultra-left line proposed by the Ninth ECCI Plenum (February 1928), even though the line was endorsed by the CPGB politbureau in March under pressure from Moscow. The new line of the Sixth Comintern Congress was approved by the Tenth Congress of CPGB in January 1929, but it was opposed by a large minority. The CPGB Central Committee was severely criticized at the Tenth Plenum by Manuilsky, Piatnitsky, Khitarov, Molotov and others for conducting itself 'as a society of friends, not a bolshevik party'. The new line resulted in a fall in membership to 2,500 in 1929. The ECCI addressed an 'Open Letter' (Nov.1929) to the Eleventh CPGB Congress ordering it to 'expose the treacherous social-fascist role of the Labour Government and its henchmen' and to bring the Party fully on to the Comintern line. The Central Committee was re-constituted by a 'nominations commission', instead of being elected by open congress voting. Horner, Rothstein, Bell and Inkpin were dropped; R. P. Dutt readily adjusted himself; and the Party submitted *en bloc* to the new line.

L. J. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party*, London, 1966; T. Bell, *The British Communist Party*, London, 1937; Jane Degras, op. cit., Vols. II and III.

[18] J. T. Murphy attended the Second Congress of the Comintern (1920) and took an active part in founding the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU, Profintern) in 1921. After the Fifth Congress he became a member of the International Control Commission and, at the Seventh Plenum (Nov.–Dec. 1926), of ECCI. He moved the resolution at the joint meeting of the ICC and ECCI on 27 September 1927 which expelled Trotsky from the ECCI. According to his autobiography, he 'was in charge of the British Section . . . [which] meant not merely England but the Dominions', and he worked with Kuusinen and Manuilsky in making preparations for the Sixth Congress. Three years later he was pushed out by Harry Pollitt, who had already become General Secretary of CPGB and, in April 1931, a member of the powerful ECCI Political Secretariat. There was the usual campaign of slander which followed Murphy's letter of resignation from the Party in 1932. J. T. Murphy, *New Horizons*, London, 1941.

[19] H. M. Hyndman (1842–1921) was one of the founders of the Social-Democratic Federation (SDF), and an advocate of 'fairer partnership between Britain and India'. A prolific writer and energetic debater he left his mark on the course of development of British socialism. His friends included Marx, Mazzini, Morris, Shaw, Naoroji, Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal. H. M. Hyndman, *England for All*, 1881; *The Economics of Socialism*,

1912; *Awakening of Asia*, 1920. C. Tsuzuki, *H. M. Hyndman and British Socialism*. His cordial relation with the old guard of the Indian nationalist movement is mentioned in the note on him in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. S. P. Sen, Calcutta, Vol. II, 1973, pp.177–9.

[20] Thomas Bell was elected a member of the ECCI at the Third Congress (June–July 1921) of the Comintern. At the Fourth Congress he was replaced by MacManus and at the Fifth by Pollitt and MacManus, but at the Eight Plenum (May 1927) he was principal speaker with Kuusinen on the 'Theses on War and Danger of War', and at the Sixth Congress (July–Sept. 1928) he was not only elected to the ECCI but also appointed to the Political Secretariat. With Stalin, Molotov, Lozovsky, Manuilsky, Kuusinen, Bela Kun and Walter Ulbricht he was a member of the Commission which, at Stalin's bidding, recommended total reconstitution of the leadership of the CP of the USA. In 1929 the leaders of the Majority group, Jay Lovestone, Ben Gitlow and Bertram Wolfe were expelled, together with about 350 other functionaries of the American CP.

Bell presumably did not prove to be sufficiently ruthless and reliable as a Stalinist and he was dropped shortly after the Tenth Plenum. He was not re-elected to the Central Committee of CPGB at the eleventh Congress (December 1929), and was replaced by R. P. Arnot in the ECCI at its eleventh Plenum (March–April 1931).

T. Bell, *The British Communist Party*, London, 1937; Jane Degras, op. cit, Vol.2.

[21] In April 1925 representatives of Russian and British Trade Unions met in London and set up a joint committee. Prior to that A. A. Purcell and several other leaders of the British Trade Union Congress had attended the Sixth Congress of the Russian trade unions in October 1924, and Russian delegates had attended the British Trade Union Congress at Hull in September. The Sixth ECCI Plenum (Feb.–March 1926) in its Thesis on the Tasks of the Communists in the Trade Union Movement described the formation of the Anglo-Russian Committee as 'a new stage in the history of the international trade union movement'. However, after the failure of the General Strike in Britain, the relation between the Comintern and the TUC became strained. There were several meetings of the Anglo-Russian Committee in 1926 and 1927, but after the British government terminated the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement in May 1927 (following upon police raid on Arcos Ltd, a Russian trade corporation, and the premises of the Soviet Trade Delegation), Russian attacks on the TUC became increasingly bitter. Soviet delegates were refused visas to attend the TUC Congress at Edinburgh; they publicly charged the TUC with treachery and sabotage. The TUC then withdrew from the Anglo-Russian Committee. Degras, op. cit. Vol. II. SNR.

Selection from *Revolutionary Age*

Vol. I, No. 3 December

The Conference of the German Communist Opposition

Selection from *Gegen den Strom*

Vol. II, No. 50 December

The Development of the International Opposition

The Conference of the German Communist Opposition*

The crisis in the Communist International has become so widespread that practically all of its sections are affected by it. It is no exaggeration to say that the Communist Parties which in a number of countries were once powerful political factors are today well-advanced in the process of internal disintegration and of isolation from the masses. Taking place in this alarming situation the *II National Conference of the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition)* is of great historical significance.

Next to the Russian the German Party is the most important section of the International. In its ranks are to be found the best products of the revolutionary proletarian movement in a highly industrial country. But today these elements, who with their rich experience, high standard of political education and wealth of Marxian tradition, are so badly needed, are 'outside' the Party. They have not left the Party! They have been excluded by the bureaucratic machine. From the Party as an organic part—the most advanced part—of the class they can never be expelled. This the Conference made clear.

The problem that attracted the keenest attention of the entire Conference was *the future of the Opposition*. Although the question was naturally approached from the point of view of the German situation the answer is of international significance. For Oppositions have developed in practically all countries; the problems of one are the problems of all. To the disappointment of the official Party bureaucracy on the one hand and of the Social-democrats on the other, *the Conference emphatically rejected even the slightest tendency in the direction of the organization of a new Party.* It declared unequivocally that between Social-democracy and Communism there is no half-way house. The Conference decided that *the object of the Opposition must be to save the Party and the International from the dangerous ultra-left line of the ECCI and of the C.C. of the C.P.G.*

The definition of the object, however, was not enough. What is still more important is to clearly visualize the way in which the goal will be reached. Here the question is not one of principle but of tactics. Should the Opposition confine itself to the inner-Party struggle or should it develop its activities outside? Once it is agreed that it should operate in both of these fields there arises the question of the relation and the proportion between the two. The developments of the activities among the masses, simultaneously with the efforts at winning over greater numbers of Party members to the point of view of the Opposition, will make the struggle inside the Party more effective. It is not enough to criticise the mistakes of the present leadership. Nor is it enough simply to indicate the correct line. The Opposition is obliged to appear before the masses as the standard-bearer of the correct Communist line which has been discarded by the present leadership. In doing this it does not thereby become a new Party. On the contrary, it demonstrates in action that it is a loyal and able defender of the Communist Party and performs its duties even when it is expelled by the official bureaucracy. The Party is neither a bureaucratic apparatus nor an abstract entity. It is an organic section of a class, consciously expressing the strivings of the entire class and leading it to the realization of its historic mission.

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* From *Revolutionary Age*, Vol. I, No. 3, 1 December 1929, pp. 14–17; signed article by M.N. Roy. SNR.

There cannot be two Communist Parties in any one country. If the official Party bureaucracy goes too far in the present ultra-left deviation it may eventually leave the ground of Communist principles. While this perspective is not altogether excluded, what is more likely, however, is the overthrow of the present leadership through an upheaval of the membership and the eventual restoration of the Leninist line of the Party and of the Comintern.

In addition to answering in this sense the burning question regarding the development of the Opposition the Conference concerned itself keenly with the problem of revolution generally. *A draft platform of the Opposition based upon the fundamentals of the Comintern programme was submitted by Comrade Thalheimer for discussion*. The platform and the discussion of it showed that the basic tasks of the Communist movement, long neglected by the official 'leaderships', are being tackled by the Opposition.

The conference presented a picture that has long disappeared from the Communist International. It was a picture of a free discussion of the problems facing the movement. It was a picture of collective work. It was a picture of how a Communist Party should be. The rise of competent new forces at the side of the old well-known leaders was demonstrated in the report of *Hausen* on the *Political Situation* and of *Kohlrauch* on *Municipal Policy*. These reports supplemented the *general report* of Comrade *Walcher* and of Comrade *Thalheimer* on the *Platform of the C.P.G. Opposition*.

There were about 80 delegates and over 80 fraternal delegates at this Conference. On the first day the Conference met in the hall of the

Thuringian Landtag, the Communist fraction of which (seven out of eight) belongs to the Opposition. On Sunday the Conference met in the Volkhaus so that a larger number of guests could be present. Less than one year ago a small group of comrades openly raised the standard of the Opposition. Today the Conference had ample reason for feeling satisfied with the progress made in such a short time. The dues-paying membership of about 6,000 is no indication of its real strength. For the thousands still inside the Party who sympathize with and support the Opposition do not pay double dues. Then there are entire local groups expelled from the Party which control mass organizations all over the country. The Opposition has eight weekly and bi-monthly organs. The general circulation of the press is about 25,000. The preparations for a daily are well under way and the Conference resolved to begin publishing it from 15 November.

Representatives from the Oppositions in Czechoslovakia, Austria and Alsace were present at the Conference. It is but natural that the Opposition movements in the various countries should wish to have close relations among themselves. But any definite organizational steps should be preceded by a period of preparatory work for clarifying a number of international problems on which there exist differences of opinion. Agreement on the basic questions of strategy and tactics reached through a free and exhaustive discussion is a condition for the development of healthy Opposition movements.

For this purpose it is necessary to have an organ for carrying on such a discussion. Without proper understanding of these international questions it is not possible to work out the correct tactics for our struggle. The foundation of an *international review* is an urgent necessity of the day.[1]

Note

[1] Italicization of words and sentences in the original used in *Revolutionary Age* have been retained but the American spellings have been anglicized. *Revolutionary Age* was the organ of the Communist Opposition in the USA. SNR.

The Development of the International Opposition*

In one section of the Communist International after another the Opposition crystallized as a tendency which maintains the normal development of the different Parties, a process which alone can place the Communist International into the position of overcoming its present crisis. Whilst the Opposition-groups have developed essentially towards the same goal, the Opposition in the various Parties, however, have the tendency to deal with the particular appearance of the general crisis from somewhat different points of view. At the beginning that is unavoidable because the Opposition in a particular Party arises primarily as resistance against the wrong tactics which have been forced upon this Party. Therefore, the international nature of the problem is initially not clearly comprehended, and the national formulation of the question is overstressed by the respective Opposition.

Differences have existed over the resolutions of the Sixth Congress. From the very start the German Opposition has expressed its disagreement with the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International and the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions. The chief points of difference were the evaluation of the world situation and the labour union policy. It was known that the Opposition in other Parties did not fully share this view about the Sixth Congress. However, in order to maintain the homogeneity of the Opposition as an international development, those comrades who disagreed with the views of the German Opposition relinquished the opportunity to discuss it openly. A superficial homogeneity however does not further the development of the international Opposition. The healthier way is to initiate discussion on the points of difference with the aim of accomplishing not a superficial but a well-considered unity of opinions. Until now the lack of technical means (publications, finance etc.) has hampered such discussions.

The Opposition in the American Communist Party has always expressed openly its approval of the resolutions of the Sixth Congress. In so far as the problems facing the American Party are taken into account, the attitude of the American Opposition can be justified to a certain extent.[1] In the Second issue of the *Revolutionary Age* (published by the American Opposition) Comrade Wolfe claims that the resolutions of the Sixth Congress are not only correct from the American point of view but also from the international point of view.[2] This is the start of a discussion of this important factor, of a discussion which could contribute a great deal towards the development of an international Opposition.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 50, pp. 10–11, 14 December 1929; signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

Comrade Wolfe's point of departure is the well-known thesis of the American Opposition: 'The resolutions of the Sixth Congress were correct; the evil arose when the Tenth Plenum initiated the revision of these correct resolutions.' In defence of the resolutions of the Sixth Congress Comrade Wolfe holds onto the view that the 'negative attitude' of the German Opposition is as mistaken as the 'anti-Lenin critique' of the Troskyists. He does not examine the attitude of the German Opposition but merely establishes the position of the American comrades. Comrade Wolfe assumes that the Sixth Congress met at a turning point in post-war history, in order to justify the theory of the Third Period. He does not give any proof, however, in what respect a turning-point existed. Indeed, the Sixth Congress established a general strategic and tactical line for the whole period, but the difficulty is that it was a *wrong line* constructed on a *mistaken estimate of the world situation*. That has been amply proved by the events which occurred after the Sixth World Congress. The 1st-of-May-adventure of the German Party, which revealed the ultra-left nature of the current international leadership most sharply, occurred before the Tenth Plenum and was the practical application of the tactics of the Third Period. Even the 'American tragedy', which influenced, of course, the attitude of the American comrades in all matters, had its roots in the theory of the 'Third Period'. The excessive emphasis on special American conditions could be ridiculed at the 6th Congress as 'extraordinary nonsense', but the theory of the Third Period admits such nonsense as wisdom. The Third Period is the period of the imminent acute crisis of world capitalism.

Therefore, if this theory were correct, the American comrades who believed that Bittelman's 'summit theory' was wrong, would surely have to be condemned as 'right opportunists' if they have not changed their mind in the meantime.

Comrade Wolfe claims that the colonial resolution of the Sixth Congress was based on the experiences of eight years of struggle of the Chinese Revolution. But it was not so at all. The Sixth Congress was totally incapable of drawing any lessons from the catastrophic defeat in China. It did not amend the policy of putschist adventurism culminating in the Cantonese uprising, but demanded the general application of this policy in other colonial countries. The application of this policy produces bitter fruits for us in India where the communists could have gained the leadership of the whole movement with the correct policy. With regard to the so-called theory of 'decolonization', those who condemned it simply did not know what they were talking about. The events since the Sixth Congress have shown how mistakenly the latter evaluated the character and methods of imperialism in the post-war period of general capitalist decline.

Just as little did the estimate of the war danger correspond with reality. The Third Period and the 'imminent danger of war' went hand in hand. Then the programme. Indeed, it was an achievement to adopt a programme, but the document is not as ideal as seen by the American comrades. We shall return to this very important matter another time.

The chief mistake of the Sixth Congress was the attitude towards the issue of labour unions. The views which were later summarized in the theory of the Third Period inspired the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions to formulate it's union-splitting policy. 'Duplicity' is not a small error. A World Congress which is ambiguous on such a vital issue as the union tactics cannot be characterized as the most important congress since the Second one. On this vital issue the Tenth Plenum made a weak—albeit ambiguous too—attempt at revising the resolution of the Sixth Congress in the opposite direction, in the direction of reason.

We hope that these general and preliminary remarks about the views of the American comrades may serve as material for the discussion of the role of the Sixth Congress.

Notes

[1] Of the several factions in the Communist Party of the USA, that led by Jay Lovestone commanded the majority from 1927 to 1929. The Party Convention of September 1927 'established the [Lovestone] faction for the first time in real, as well as formal, control of the party apparatus.' C. J. P. Cannon, *The First Ten Years of American Communism: Report of a Participant*, New York, 1962, p. 174. At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern Lovestone opposed Stalin's behind-the-scenes efforts to undermine Bukharin's authority and fiercely controverted Lozovsky on the issue of 'Red' trade Unions. However, he was elected to the ECCI together with his chief rival in the American Party, William Z. Foster. Despite the intervention of ECCI's delegates Dengel and Pollitt, the Lovestone faction won an overwhelming majority also at the Sixth Convention of the CPUSA in February-March 1929, but in the main it accepted the new policies of the Sixth Comintern Congress. Under pressure from Moscow, Lovestone even introduced in the Convention, however reluctantly, a formal resolution condemning Bukharin and including a call for his removal from the ECCI Presidium. This was supported by 95 out of 105 delegates.

That, however, did not satisfy Stalin, and in April–May 1929 the ECCI set up an American Commission consisting of 8 Russians (Stalin, Molotov, Lozovsky, Manuilsky and 4 others) and 4 subservient non-Russian members of the *apparatchiki* (Kuusinen, Bela Kun, Walter Ulbricht and Tom Bell). Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, New York, 1960, pp. 406–7. Stalin took a leading part in the Commission, and an 'Open Letter' of instruction to the American Communists was adopted by the ECCI Presidium. The Commission also required Lovestone and Bittelman to be removed from the United States and given minor Comintern jobs in Moscow. In response to this decision, the Lovestone faction representatives then in Moscow issued a statement that 'the ECCI desires to destroy the [American] Central Committee'. The Political Secretariat now decided to remove Lovestone and his two most prominent supporters, Benjamin Gitlow and Bertram D. Wolfe from all their leading positions and to purge the Political Committee of the CPUSA of 'all members who refused to submit to the Comintern's decisions'. Lovestone was ordered to stay back in Russia, but he managed to get out with the help of his friends in the Soviet Foreign Office.

In June, in accordance with Moscow's instruction, Lovestone, Gitlow and Wolfe were expelled from the CPUSA. In the following months between 200 to 350 members were expelled, most of them Party functionaries, and 'approximately two thousand dropped out voluntarily'. The Lovestoneites got together to form a new organization in September, the Communist Party of the USA (Majority Group). Its first national conference was held in New York in October 1929 and a National Council was elected. The first issue of its organ, *Revolutionary Age* came out on 1 November. The Lovestoneites constituted the Communist Opposition in the United States.

Besides Draper's *The Roots of American Communism*, New York, 1957 and *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, and Cannon's *The First Ten Years of American Communism*, other relevant books include: Benjamin Gitlow, *I Confess: the Truth about American Communism*, New York, 1939; Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party: A Political History*, New York, 1974; Bertram D. Wolfe, *What is the Communist Opposition*, New York, 1933; Robert J. Alexander, *The Right Opposition: the Lovestoneites and the International Communist Opposition of the 1930s*, Greenwood Press, 1981.

[2] Bertram D. Wolfe, 'American-born of a German immigrant father and an American-born mother also of German family background' (Draper, p. 141), began as a pacifist and then became a prominent young leader of the new Left Wing of the American Socialist Party. Active in the CPUSA since its inception he became the 'second ranking person in the Lovestoneite group during most of its existence'. (Alexander p.134). In January 1929 he was sent to Moscow as the CPUSA representative and took part in the show-down with Stalin and the ECCI's American Commission. With Lovestone and Gitlow he was consequently expelled from the CPUSA. A member of the National Committee of the Communist Party (Majority group), he was most prominent in the journalistic and educational activities of the Party. After the dissolution of the Lovestoneite Organization in 1940 Bert Wolfe gradually established himself as a scholar of repute, his best-known work being *Three Who Made a Revolution*. He was associated with the Hoover Institution at Stanford, and was a visiting professor at the University of California. SNR.

SELECTED WORKS

1930

15. *The Lessons of the Lahore Congress*

16. Selections from *Gegen den Strom*

17. Selections from *Gegen den Strom*
    Arbeiter Politik,
    INKOPP and Revolutionary Age

18. Selection from the Manifesto of July 1930

The Lessons of the Lahore Congress

Some Suggestions About the Future of Our Struggle for Freedom

February 1930

Introductory editorial note

According to A. K. Hindi (assumed name of Tayab Shaikh), *The Lessons of the Lahore Congress* was written by Roy in Berlin, but published under the signatures of Roy's colleagues of the period, Kunwer Brajesh Singh ('brother of the late Raja Audhesh Singh of Kalakankar') and others. Tayab Sheikh, who was himself a signatory, was at that time Secretary of the Hindusthan Association of Central Europe. The pamphlet was published from Berlin and subsequently from Bombay in *The Vanguard*, edited by Yusuf Meherally, and in other Indian papers. (A. K. Hindi, *M. N. Roy: The Man who Looked Ahead*, Ahmedabad, 1938, pp.198–217.) The pamphlet did not carry Roy's name; it also deliberately gave London as its place of authorship. This was done to mislead the British and Indian Secret Services. Besides, there was pressure on the German government to expel Roy from Germany.

The text of *The Lessons* quoted extensively in Hindi's book is a shortened version of the pamphlet; it leaves out many passages and summarizes the later part. The complete original text, of which a printed copy is preserved in the M. N. Roy Archives of the Nehru Museum, is reproduced here.

The main resolution of the Lahore Congress (1929) declared that 'the word "Swaraj" in Art. I of the Congress Constitution shall mean Complete Independence'. It authorized the All-India Congress Committee 'to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise, and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary'. (B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, 1935, p.605). SNR.

The Lessons of the Lahore Congress

Some Suggestions About the Future of our Struggle for Freedom

In his presidential address Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru called upon the Lahore Congress 'to declare in favour of Complete Independence and to devise schemes and sanctions in order to achieve its goal'. The first part of the task the Congress has done. At last, it has definitely declared its goal to be complete national freedom. This is a very important resolution. The Lahore Congress will remain a landmark in the history of our struggle for freedom for having made this momentous decision. But the second task set to it by its president has not been accomplished. The declaration in favour of complete independence, despite its historic significance as such, will remain a mere expression of desire, until the people of India have clearly indicated to them the road leading to that coveted goal. As the leader of the movement for freedom the Congress must find that road, and guide the Indian people to overcome the treacherous pitfalls and dangerous difficulties besetting it. This the Congress has not yet done. Neither the resolution adopted nor the amendment of Subhas Bose rejected opens up before the Indian people the road to the goal of complete national independence.

A critical analysis of our accomplishments is a condition for our ability to build further upon them. If we want to appreciate properly the Lahore Congress as opening up a new stage in our struggle for freedom, we must be conscious of the defects in its resolution, the sooner to remove them so that the Indian people can travel triumphantly on the road to freedom. Saving the very important declaration regarding the goal of the Nationalist Movement, the Lahore Congress has taken a negative attitude. As regards Civil Disobedience and non-payment of taxes, the only point in the resolution having a positive character and which has driven the vacillating elements out of the Congress, the resolution is explicitly not for immediate application. Nor can it be expected that the Working Committee will sanction its application in the near future. Effective Civil Disobedience and non-payment of taxes are conditional upon political, propagandist, agitational and organizatory preparations which cannot be done unless the Congress is armed with a Programme of Immediate Action. In so far as such a programme of action (which must be something entirely different from the so-called Constructive Programme of Bardoli) is still lacking, Civil Disobedience and non-payment of taxes remain outside the realm of practical politics. The other two points of the Lahore Resolution obviously will not bring India any nearer to the goal of Independence. The boycott of the Round Table Conference by the Congress will not have any more practical result than the boycott of the Simon Commission. Of course, those standing for the right of the Indian people to complete national freedom, and consequently challenging the self-assumed prerogative of the British Parliament to settle the fate of India, can have nothing to do with these Commissions and Conferences which are not responsible to the Indian people. But simply to boycott them is to go only half-way. This is a futile journey, unless the other half of the way, which is by far the more important and difficult half, is also tackled. It is already evident that the Round Table Conference will take place, and will have much greater Indian support than the Simon Commission had. Not only the *Johukumwallahs* and the Liberals will attend and accept the decisions of the Conference. They will be reinforced by the Independents and the Responsivists. So, by simple boycott we cannot kill the Round Table Conference. What is the Congress going to do, when its decisions will be imposed upon India with the support of a formidable array of Indian leaders—not only Sastris and Sethnas, but Malavyas and Jinnahs with Kelkers and Jayakers to boot? This is the central question, and the Lahore Resolution does not provide any answer to this question. Hence it is defective. Presumably the prospective Benn–Irwin Reforms will be boycotted by the Congress as the Montagu–Chelmsford brand. But will that bring us any nearer to national freedom? The Congress may thunder one negation after another; but the tentacles of foreign domination will be driven deeper in the heart of India, strengthened by the adhesion of once popular leaders who also claim to be acting in the interests of the nation. What is needed is a positive programme of action. Only in connection with that can boycott be of some political value. The boycott of the legislatures ordered by the Lahore Congress will be of no more practical value. Firstly, it is already evident that the boycott will not be universal. Secondly, granted that all the Congressmen will leave the legislatures, very little advance will be made towards the goal of independence. It is beginning the old game all over again. In his presidential speech Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru advocated the boycott of the 'sham legislatures' on the ground that this step would release popular energy and contribute to the development of the real struggle in the form of the non-payment of taxes and general strike. But it is rather difficult to see how this will happen. The development of the real struggle in the way indicated by him requires a comprehensive programme of action involving the largest masses of the people only a minute fraction of whom are in any way connected with the 'sham legislatures'. Indeed, provided with such a programme, the Congress could even utilize the 'sham legislatures' for developing the 'real struggle' as Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru desires. In any case, past experience has proved that simple boycott of the legislatures does not lead anywhere. Still, according to the Lahore resolution the Congress proposes to fight for complete independence with this ineffective weapon.

On the other hand, those, who were correctly dissatisfied with this defective resolution, proposed measures which, despite their drastic appearance, would be of little more practical value. General Strike and non-payment of taxes, which were advocated as weapons in the struggle for freedom by the president as well as by the Left Opposition, must be preceded by a period of propaganda and organization. There must be a programme of action for this period. As long as the movement remains without such a programme of action, general strike and non-payment of taxes cannot be more than high-sounding slogans. The Congress or any other political body might call for a general strike; but that is not enough. The readiness of the workers to respond to the call is the decisive factor. The events of the last two years have demonstrated the readiness of the workers to strike; but they have struck or resisted the attack of the employers primarily to promote or defend their immediate economic interests. Although often industrial strikes assume pronounced political complexion, the workers are moved into action primarily by the consideration not of big political issues, but of questions immediately affecting their everyday life—questions of wages, conditions of labour, treatment by the employers, right of assembly and organization etc. Therefore the readiness of the workers of the entire country to respond to the call for a political general strike can be created only by demonstrating to them in practice that the immediate grievances of their daily life are connected with the big political task—that of conquering national freedom. In other words, the organization of the political general strike as a weapon in the struggle for national freedom is conditional upon developing the struggle of the workers with immediate economic and partial political demands. Indeed, it is an illusion to believe that suddenly, one fine morning, the workers throughout the country will down tools obeying the mandate of the Congress or any other party. Such demonstrations may take place for a day or two and in specified localities; they have relative political value serving as the lever for developing the general movement; but they do not paralyse the state machinery. Even in countries with very highly organized labour movement have general strikes taken place seldom in such mechanical way, all on a sudden responding to a call. In India, under the present circumstances, the chances for such a mechanical action are still less. Here an effective general strike can happen only as dynamic outcome of one or the other local struggle. A simple industrial dispute in a particular locality can be the starting point of a gigantic movement, which spreading like wildfire, will culminate in a general strike affecting the entire country. For example, the heroic struggle of the tin-plate workers of Golmuri could be the starting point. Agitation could be begun for having the workers of Jamshedpur declare a sympathetic strike. Then to extend the movement on the railways, collieries, so on and so forth. But for developing the movement systematically in this way the agitation cannot be only on general political slogans. These should be combined with the immediate demands of the workers. Indeed, in the first stages, the movement could be and should be developed, that is, the strike movement could be extended, only by agitating for the removal of the immediate grievances of the workers. By conducting this agitation the Congress or any particular political party will mobilize larger and larger masses of workers around itself, thus coming nearer to the position where it can wield the weapon of general strike effectively. The general strike is an action not of the entire population, but of the workers, particularly of the workers employed in key industries and productive occupations. Therefore the movement for it can never be successful, unless it puts the immediate demands of these workers in the forefront of its agitation. So here again the necessity for a comprehensive and clearly defined programme of the National Revolution becomes evident. The General Strike cannot be something by itself. If it is meant seriously, then it must be a link in the chain—the struggle for freedom developing by stages towards the final goal.

The measures that can be effective weapons in the struggle may, however, be disastrous, if prematurely applied. Both the general strike and non-payment of taxes belong to this category of measures. The general strike, as advocated both by Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose, will be a political action. It will obviously not be a concerted action of the working class for enforcing some definite economic demands either of the entire class or of the workers of a particular industry or locality. Even in such a case a general strike tends to outgrow the bounds of a pure industrial dispute, and raises political issues. The English General Strike of 1926 was the example. In the short period of nine days the situation sharpened into an acute crisis which admitted no middle course: either the Trade Union Congress must challenge the constitutional authority of the Parliament, and lead the workers from the general strike to an insurrection for overthrowing the government; or the general strike must be called off leaving the miners in the lurch. If a general strike taking place on a purely industrial issue (to resist the reduction of the miners' wages) developed into such an acute revolutionary crisis, there cannot be any doubt about the inevitable outcome of a general strike called for enforcing explicitly political demands. It can take place only as the prelude to a higher form of struggle for which our movement is obviously not yet prepared. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that all on a sudden, in the immediate future, there will take place a general strike at the call of the Congress, the nationalist movement will blunder into the final struggle for power, utterly unprepared and unequipped for the titanic task, and consequently will be disastrously defeated by the superior force of the enemy. Fortunately, the danger is very remote. For, a general strike seriously challenging the authority of the government is very unlikely to happen by magic. It can happen only as the culminating point of an entire stage of the struggle for immediate economic and partial political demands, in which the forces of national freedom will be marshalled, trained, prepared and equipped for the final battle.

The non-payment of taxes can be more easily organized than the general strike; and, therefore, any campaign in that direction is more likely to bring us prematurely in a clash with the established authorities. In view of this alarming consequence of any serious, large-scale no-tax campaign, it is sure that it will never be undertaken. Thus non-payment of taxes is an utterly impractical slogan. Instead of deluding ourselves with high-sounding slogans, which cannot be put into practice, we must find a different way for approaching the peasantry with the object of setting them in movement which will mean a tremendous acquisition of strength for our struggle for freedom. The way is country-wide agitation for the redress of the immediate grievances of the peasantry. They are numerous, and the agitation for their redress can develop into a powerful mass movement without immediately transgressing the limits of law. Once the movement has spread, and the peasantry are involved in a struggle for the promotion and defence of their immediate interests, then it will be possible to organize tenants' strikes (which is meant by non-payment of taxes, if anything definite is meant at all) for enforcing the demands of the peasantry. Non-payment of taxes, that is, tenants' strike, just as the general strike of the workers is one of the numerous weapons in our armoury; but the party of the National Revolution must have a programme for the realization of which this and all other weapons are to be used in respective stages of the struggle.

Finally, Subhas Bose's proposal that the Congress should set up a parallel government sounds very radical; but in reality it will not bring the country any nearer to freedom, although it might land a few romantic souls in jail. The establishment of a parallel government will be either a ridiculous gesture or a notice to the British to clear out of the country. As there is absolutely no reason to believe that the British will take the notice seriously, there will be two alternatives before the parallel government; to enforce its notice to the unwelcome guest or to make a laughing-stock of itself. A parallel government set up under the present conditions of the movement will necessarily travel the latter course; for it will have no power to enforce its notice. It can only be a ridiculous spectacle, if it fails to exercise the functions of a government, and the slightest effort in this direction is sure to be suppressed by the real government with power. Those who propose the establishment of a parallel government obviously have the Irish example in mind; but they overlook a very important factor in the case of Ireland, namely, the Republican Army (formerly the Irish Brotherhood). History of the world teaches us that a revolutionary government, that is, a government overthrowing or desiring to overthrow the established one, always rises out of an insurrection. When an organ of power grows out of the victorious struggle of the Indian people, only then will the establishment of a national government be an issue of practical politics. Meanwhile it is romanticism to talk of establishing a parallel government.

What is to be done immediately by the advocates of complete independence is not to set up an ineffective parallel government, but to state clearly what will be the nature, structure and task of the future national government, so that the majority of the people are actively involved in the struggle for the establishment of that government. In short, the starting point of the struggle for national independence is not the formal establishment of an impotent and nominal parallel government, but formulation of the programme of National Revolution. First tell the people what national independence will bring them—how their conditions will be changed under a free nationalist regime—then they will follow you in the struggle for national independence, provided that the programme reflects the interests of the majority of the people as a programme of National Revolution must.

The historic significance of the Lahore Congress must be judged not by its resolution which declares for complete independence but fails to indicate the way in that direction. The resolution, Subhas Bose's amendment to it, the President's speech, the defection of the Independents and Responsivists, the exclusion of the Left Wing from the Working Committee, the declaration of the Left Wing to organize themselves into a new party—all these are so many straws showing which way the wind blows. The dominating feature of the Lahore

Congress was that it reverberated with the echo of the very significant slogans—'Long Live the Revolution' and 'Down with Imperialism'—thundered by thousands. The spirit represented by these slogans was not actually embodied in the resolution of the Congress, but the overwhelming majority of the delegates, volunteers and visitors were actuated by it. Even the Presidential Address, which sought to hold the balance in a highly tense atmosphere, breathed the spirit, though rather haltingly. Jawaharlal represented the spirit of the movement gathering strength all over the country, when he said that 'the relics of a bygone age' would have no place in a free India. He referred only to the Indian States; but they are only one, the most outstanding, of these ugly relics. When the most active and advanced elements of the nationalist movement hailed the hoisting of the National Flag with the cry 'Long Live the Revolution', they declared, on behalf of the overwhelming majority of the nation, that all 'the relics of a bygone age' must go. India is in the throes of a revolution—in the process of rebirth. National Independence is the first stage of this revolution. The people of India must be entirely free of foreign domination, in order to be able to rebuild their country—to catch up with the tremendous progress made by other nations, while they remained in political bondage, and the consequent economic backwardness, and cultural stagnation. This is the lesson of the Lahore Congress. If we learn this lesson well, we will be able to find the way the Lahore Congress failed to indicate sufficiently clearly.

We are on the right road, when we at last know that the **Nationalist Movement** is a **Revolutionary Movement**. National Independence is not a thing in itself. It is the means to an end. India must be free from foreign domination, for this prevented her normal development. Like the other more civilized nations India would have successfully done away with all 'the relics of a bygone age', had not the free evolution of her social forces been obstructed by the intervention of an outside factor. The nations, who today stand at the van of modern civilization, all underwent a revolutionary change, at one time or other, during the last three centuries. Similar change must take place in India, if she is to rank in the category of the modern civilized nations. Otherwise, she will go down in the struggle for existence. So, in the face of all obstructions the striving for this indispensable change grew. The nationalist movement is the expression of that striving. Hence, the nationalist movement is a revolutionary movement. Its basic task is to build a modern India on the ruins of the old. This task had to be accomplished by the Indian people as an inevitable stage in their normal process of evolution, even if there had been no foreign intervention. This latter factor simply delayed the accomplishment of the historic task. Consequently, today its elimination has become an essential condition for the internal readjustment of Indian society. Nevertheless, to build a new India on the ruins of the old still remains the end of the nationalist movement, the overthrow of the foreign rule being only a means to that end. So long as the National Congress confuses the end with the means, as it still does, it will not find the way even to the immediate goal, that is, national independence. Only by being clearly conscious of its deeply revolutionary mission will the nationalist movement be able to find the road to national independence which is a means for the realization of its historic mission. In that case, it will be in a position to work out a Programme of National Revolution stating clearly and comprehensively how the country will be reconstructed once the essential condition for such reconstruction has been realized. That programme will present before the country an inspiring picture serving as the powerful lever to mobilize the overwhelming majority of the people in an active and effective struggle for national independence. Once the people know what awaits them on the other side of the barrier and it corresponds with their crying needs, they will know how to break the barrier—they are sure to develop the necessary force, even if it appears to be lacking today. When the Lahore Congress talked rather vaguely of general strike and non-payment of taxes, it indicated a groping towards the reservoir of indomitable force. It groped in the dark because it does not know as yet how to set that force into movement. It must still learn how to develop, organize and lead that force. On this point we propose to make some suggestions. Inspired by the lessons of the Lahore Congress, we dare blaze the trail that it did indicate but rather vaguely.

A party consciously fighting not only for national independence, but national revolution is the crying need of the present situation. The various efforts made in this direction during the last years testify to this need. Immediately after the Madras Congress had passed the Independence Resolution there was organized a Republican Party under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. In course of the following year the Independence League came into being. For years the Workers' and Peasants' Party has been struggling against the relentless forces of oppression. The latest step in the same direction is the formation of the Democratic Party by the 60 odd members of the All-India Congress Committee who walked out in protest against the exclusion of the Left Wing leaders from the new Working Committee. It still remains to be seen whether this latest venture will be any more successful than the previous ones. Whatever may be the case, this as well as the others expressed a striving growing out of the situation. As such the projected Democratic Party should be welcome; but at the same time the sponsors of the project should be warned not to overlook the nature of the forces that drive them in the direction they tend to go. A political party is not formed by a group of individuals. It rises as the embodiment of the strivings of an entire social stratum with homogenous interests. Therefore the first act of a political party that comes into being dynamically and promises to develop into a serious political force is to work out a programme reflecting the strivings of its social background. No political party can function without a programme. Past efforts to form a radical nationalist party miscarried because they did not build the platform on which the projected party could stand. The best manner of fomenting the growth of a National Revolutionary Party is to work out the programme of national revolution. When this is before the country, all the forces striving for the national revolution will find a rallying ground. Thus the party will rise as the organized will of the masses.

For the consideration of all those who unconditionally stand for complete national independence we propose the following as an outline of the Programme of National Revolution: 1. Establishment of a Federal Republic of India with an advanced Democratic Constitution, the Executive being fully responsible to a single-chamber Parliament elected by universal (men and women) adult suffrage; 2. Provincial Autonomy in local matters, the Provinces, reconstructed for assuring as far as possible linguistic, and religious homogeneity, having government as democratic as the central government; 3. Abolition (without compensation) of the Native States and Landlordism by the decree of the Democratic National State empowering the peasants to confiscate the land; 4. Nationalization of the land, the cultivators having the occupancy right in return for the payment to the government of a unitary land-tax which shall not exceed 15 per cent of the net income; 5. Abolition of all other charges on the peasantry (for example, irrigation-tax) and of Indirect Taxation (salt-tax, excise duties, protective customs duty etc.); 6. Complete exemption of taxation for peasants living on 'uneconomic holdings'; 7. Liquidation of agricultural indebtedness in the case of the peasants in the state of insolvency; 8. Legislation for the control of usury (interests not to exceed 10 per cent per annum); 9. Organization of agricultural banks with state aid for providing cheap credit to the peasants; 10. Nationalization of the mineral resources and public utilities; 11. Legislation fixing the working-day for the wage-labourer to 8 hours; 12. Minimum wages guaranteeing a constantly rising standard of living of the workers to be fixed by law; 13. Social Insurance (against unemployment, sickness, old age, and maternity), the employers and the state contributing 75 per cent of the fund; 14. Legalization of Trade Unions and of the workers' right to strike and organize their class and political party; 15. Freedom of the press, platform and association;

16. Freedom of religion and worship; 17. Protection for minorities; 18. Free and compulsory primary education; and 19. Right to bear arms.

The introduction of these measures will raise India to the level of a modern civilized country. If this hastily drawn picture of free India appears to be, in some points, rather more advanced than the conditions in many a modern civilized country, it is because we want to guarantee that the fruits of the revolution will be equitably distributed among the great majority of the nation who will fight for them. It is, however, only a question of detail. The programme as a whole is the programme of a social transformation which raises a country from the state of mediaeval backwardness to that of modern civilization. And all the modern civilized countries have come where they are today through the realization of this programme essentially. A brief analysis of the more important items will make this clear.

The first and second points of the programme lay down the basic principle of the Constitution of free India. By their very nature they exclude any possibility of continued foreign domination in a veiled form. The right of the Indian people to have their country administered according to these established principles of democracy cannot be disputed without mocking at the entire history of those very nations, including England, which claim to be the leaders of modern civilization. The effective solution of the ugly and insidiously fomented communal dissensions, which provide British imperialism with a plausible pretext for ruling India, will be found in a democratic Federal Republic admitting Provincial autonomy as regards linguistic demarcations, local peculiarities and religious traditions. Any doubt or suspicion, that may still linger as the heritage of the past, will be satisfied with the constitutional provision for the protection of minorities. In short, on the basis of the democratic principles embodied in the first two items of the programme, the constitution of the government of free India can be easily cast with due respect for the interest of the majority of the population.

The communal question has no material basis. Its roots are not struck in the masses. It is limited to small sections of the respective religious or social groups. As soon as a common basis wil be found for the majority, the small bands of mischief-makers will find their trade declining, and will have to wind up their nefarious business, unless they would defy a constitution based upon the interests of the overwhelming majority. Should they dare follow this last mad course, they must be sternly dealt with for national progress and prosperity. What is the communal interest that the British pretend to protect? Do they grant higher protective tariff for industries owned by the Mohammedan or Parsi capitalists than to those owned by the Hindus? They do not. Do they impose lighter taxes upon the Mohammedans, Non-Brahmans, Sikhs etc.? They do not. On the other hand, how do the interests of the Mohammedans, Sikhs or Non-Brahmans differ from those of the Hindus? Does a Hindu employer pay more to a worker when this happens to be his co-religionist? He does not. Is it not a common phenomenon that hundreds of thousands of workers of different religion and community are employed together and on similar conditions by capitalists of one particular faith? A Mohammedan landlord does not collect more rent from a Hindu tenant or vice versa. In view of these and many other facts, which challenge the theory of communal interests from all sides, it is clear that the ugly disease is artificial, touching only the surface of the situation. Only a handful of **johukumwallahs** belonging to all the communities, who hanker for the miserable crumbs of government jobs or similar cheap emoluments in the gift of the foreign rulers, raise the dust of communal dissension. Then there are the Sangathani Pundits on the one camp and the mad Mullahs, on the other, who act as the agents of reaction and foreign imperialism by seeking to foist the communal canker on the deplorable ignorance of the masses. While the former band of the communalists, that is, the **johukumwallah** office hunters, will find it difficult to ply their pernicious trade when there will be no foreign master to set them on, the latter lot, Sangathanis, Hindu-Sabhawallahas and mad **Mullahs** are so many 'relics of a bygone age' which will be purged out of a modernized Indian body-politic. Meanwhile these venerable gentlemen should be warned to keep out of politics. In short, a modern democratic constitution with guarantees and safeguards to do away with doubts and suspicions is the only radical cure for communal canker flourishing but superficially in limited spots on the Indian body-politic.

The democratic constitution proposed in the programme has been adopted by all the modern civilized countries. The fact that some of them made the progress slowly and laboriously does not oblige India to do the same. It took England more than three-hundred years to democratize her system of government. In contrast, there is France and other countries which adopted a fully democratic constitution at one blow. There is no reason why India should prefer England for example.

The points in the programme dealing with the agrarian question, particularly the one about the abolition of the Native States and landlordism, are likely to cause misgiving and opposition even among the more radical section of the National Congress. Still, these are precisely the most vital points of the Programme. Without them, or having them more moderately or cautiously formulated, the programme will not be a Programme of National Revolution. For, the essence of the revolution, which our nationalist movement historically is, is to transform the nature of the ownership of land. The land is the principal means of production in India; more than 80 per cent of the population are employed on it; and agriculture is the premier industry of the country. Consequently any economic progress of the nation is primarily dependent upon a radical readjustment of property-relations in this sphere. A nation enters the stage of modern civilization by abolishing the antiquated, non-productive, feudal ownership of land. This is necessary for creating conditions for the unrestricted development of the new forces of production as the basis for greater prosperity and higher progress for the nation.

Industrial development of India is a common aspiration of the nationalist movement. What does this very legitimate and progressive aspiration signify? It signifies that the social structure of India should undergo a revolution: that antiquated means and modes of production should be discarded in favour of modern ones. The realization of this aspiration demands disruption of the old feudal, semi-feudal and akin forms of landownership. For, a specific mode of production cannot be discarded without destroying the form of property with which it is related. Until now we have seen only one side of the picture—foreign imperialism hindering the economic development of India. But there is another side of the picture which demands equal, if not greater attention—factors and conditions inside the country having similar reactionary significance. It is true that the internal reaction was galvanized by the intervention of foreign imperialism. Nevertheless, the progressive forces must be conscious of the double agency of reaction, and should strive to remove the one as well as the other. Elimination of the foreign factor alone will not clear the ground; still less will protectionism quicken the industrialization of the country.

The basic conditions for the transformation of India into a modern industrial country are: 1. the release of labour from the less productive employment on the land, 2. conversion of the accumulated wealth into fluid, productive capital, and 3. development of the purchasing power of the masses. Neither unrestricted protectionism nor even national freedom (which is the condition for real fiscal autonomy) will create all these conditions, unless national freedom means the beginning of a national revolution along the lines indicated in the programme outlined above. For industrial development, desired from the point of view of all-round national prosperity, protectionism is suicidal. Protective tariffs automatically send prices high. Unless the wages of the workers and income of the peasantry rise proportionately, the immediate effect of protection will be a restriction of trade. In other words, under the present conditions of India, in which the wages hardly rise and the peasantry sink into pauperization, protectionism is a very short-sighted policy. Its immediate effects may satisfy the blind greed of some ignorant capitalists, but it will certainly not contribute to the desired economic prosperity of the nation.

The introduction of the measures proposed by us will pour new blood in the economic veins of the country. The abolition of the Native States and landlordism is not a measure for injuring personally the few thousand gentlemen and ladies belonging to the specified category. Needless to say that we regard them not as so many individuals, but as representing a certain form of property which has become detrimental to the economic progress of the entire nation. The greater interest of the nation demands a change of the system, and those profiting by the reactionary system must consequently disappear from their parasitic existence. In proposing this necessary revolutionary measure we are guided by the basic principle of social morality—'greatest good for the greatest number'. The system to be abolished is the absorption of a considerable part of the national income by a small minority (the Maharajas, Rajas, Talukdars, Zemindars with their families, dependents and household employees all together count less than 10,000,000 out of the total population of 320,000,000). The wealth accruing to this parasitic class is not converted into productive capital. Most of it is either hoarded up as treasures, jewelleries, ornaments etc. or squandered in demoralizing luxuries. Fractions of it find their way to investment in government stocks or even in foreign banks producing a very small rate of fixed interest. Only a very small part is devoted to any productive purpose. Our proposal is that this considerable part of the national wealth should be detached from their present parasitic possessors and transferred to quarters where it will become a mighty stimulus for the economic life of the entire nation. Under the new system. What is today the unearned income of a parasitic minority will go to a democratic state which, in its turn, will thus have a solid basis for introducing extensively a modern credit system as a great incentive for rapid development of trade and industry. Now the landlords' due to the government represents a small fraction of what they extract from the peasants in the forms of legal rent and arbitrary levies. So the reduction of the burden of the peasantry to a unitary land-tax not exceeding 15 per cent of the net income will not in any way affect the treasury of the free national government. On the other hand, left in possession of a larger share of their production, the peasantry will be in a position to buy more necessities of life and modern implements for improving their mode of cultivation. The consequence is not difficult to imagine. The trade will expand, there will be new incentives for industry, and being able to employ modern implements of cultivation the peasant will increase the productivity of the land thus supplying continuous impetus to the entire economic life of the country.

A Protestant king of England was prepared to be Roman Catholic on the ground that 'Paris is worth a mass'. This prospect of the Indian people leaving behind the state of economic stagnation and poverty and marching rapidly on the road of progress and prosperity is worth risking the displeasure of a parasitic minority which has always been a strong support for the British domination. This negligible risk, however, appears to outweigh the better judgement of many. For example, last year the ugly snarling of the Punjab landlords rather nonplussed Jawaharlal Nehru who subsequently placed all kinds of amendments on his proposal of land nationalization. He even went to the extent of providing, in the programme of the Independence League, for compensation to the landlords whose estates may be nationalized. Nationalization with compensation is to give away with the left hand what one gets in the right. Where shall the national government find the huge sum of money that would be necessary, should the former owners of the nationalized estates be compensated? It would either remain heavily indebted to the ex-landlords who would thus become the dictators of the country; or it must impose such heavy taxes on the rest of the population as would cripple trade and industry.

So looked at from every angle of vision, it becomes evident that the people of India cannot work out their destiny except through a radical break with the past—without sweeping clear away all the 'relics of a bygone age'. The peasantry constitute the overwhelming majority of the Indian nation. The movement of freedom will never be successful, unless it secures the active support of the peasantry. In order to secure their active and abiding support the nationalist movement must present before them a picture of conditions which a free national government will create for them. The French Revolution mercilessly destroyed the feudal aristocracy and gave land to the peasantry. This basic achievement of the French Revolution was the foundation of the tremendous military power of Napoleon. For twenty years the peasantry supported him with men and money in return for the land and the freedom from feudal oppression they had received in consequence of the revolution. In many countries of Europe the old order was not so drastically destroyed as in France. In course of time the landlords recovered their power and privilege, if partially. They thus became a standing menace to the democratic conquest of the revolution. Today, they constitute a pillar of Fascist reaction which has abolished democratic government in a number of European countries. As guarantee against such development in India we should beware of half-measures. Appearing later on the scene of the struggle for democratic freedom India should learn from those who have already travelled the same way.

In course of the investigation of the Taxation Enquiry Committee and on many other occasions it has been found out that millions of peasants in India live (rather perish) on what is called 'uneconomic holdings', that is, that they toil on such a small plot of land as does not produce the bare subsistence for themselves. This system represents a sheer waste of labour. The basic condition for national prosperity is that every worker produces more than is necessary for his subsistence and reproduction. In order to prevent that a large amount of social labour is wasted, these miserable millions should be given the opportunity to hold on to bare physical existence, till national economy has developed enough to absorb them in more remunerative modern modes of production.

There are others, much more in number, in tens of millions, who are hardly in a better condition. Deep in debt, they toil year in and year out, always lingering on the verge of starvation. The fact that the harvest is mortgaged or even sold in advance to guarantee the payment of the usurers' dues in addition to the rent and taxes, kills in tens of millions the incentive for work. Why should they labour harder and produce more, when however much they produce, their share will be hardly enough to keep starvation away from the door? When large masses of the peasantry are in such condition, the aggregate agricultural production inevitably declines causing contraction of trade and ultimately injuring the entire national economy. The liquidation of the indebtedness of the pauperized peasantry, those who cannot pay without depriving themselves of a part of what they need for bare subsistence, therefore, is demanded for the economic progress of the nation. Besides, a close look at the situation will disclose that such liquidation will not be any loss to anybody; for, thanks to the exorbitant rate of interest and compound-interest charged by the usurers, the recorded figure of indebtedness represents a huge inflation of the actual sum involved, and in most cases the sum originally lent has long been recovered. So the proposed liquidation, while serving a very useful and beneficial purpose, will scrap some paper records which bind millions of peasants perpetually to actual slavery.

It is hardly to be expected that there will be any opposition to the items in the programme dealing with social legislation. On the one hand, rising standard of living of the masses promotes the economic development of the country (the United States of America provides an example); and, on the other, there must be some inducement for the workers to fight for national independence. It should be borne in mind that without the active support of the workers the general strike, advocated by the Left Wing of the Congress, will never be available as a weapon in the struggle for freedom. The workers must know what immediate benefit will accrue to them in consequence of national independence; otherwise, they will not have the heart in the struggle, and 'labour leaders', directly or indirectly in alliance with imperialism, will find it possible to alienate the workers from the nationalist movement. The split of the Trade Union Congress shows that this danger is not very remote.

Summarizing, let it be remarked that the programme we propose reflects the interests of the nation as a whole excluding a small minority representing 'the relics of a bygone age'. Therefore, it should be placed before the country as the picture of the new India that will rise out of National Freedom. While practically every section of the Indian people will be ultimately benefitted by the realization of this programme, no advance in this direction can be made as long as India remains under the domination of foreign imperialism. Thus national independence ceases to be an abstract conception, and stands out before the country as the beginning of a new era, the basic features of which are clearly visualized. We need no longer talk vaguely about a 'new society', but know clearly the task of our movement. This being the case, it is now easier to work out a programme of action for mobilizing the people in the struggle for national independence.

Firstly, a vigorous propaganda must be carried on for making the movement conscious of its task. The spirit rather blindly manifested at Lahore should palpitate throughout the country. Every advocate of complete independence should know that he is a member of a revolutionary army. The Party of the National Revolution growing out of this propaganda must in every way support the struggle of the masses against the present conditions of exploitation, oppression and misery; for out of this struggle will develop the organized force effectively challenging the absolutism of foreign domination. Further, when the advocates of complete independence adopt a clear and comprehensive programme of national revolution, they will see that the strivings of the workers and peasants make for the goal they themselves have in view.

The second step must be to demonstrate that our programme is supported by the overwhelming majority of the nation. Here we touch the central point of the Programme of Action so urgently needed at the moment. It is to supplement the boycott of the Round Table Conference by the demand for the election of a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY on the ground that let the entire people of India give their verdict regarding their own future. The agitation for a Constituent Assembly will immediately make the burning issue of complete independence one of practical politics. It will be a practical assertion of the right of self-determination. It will be the clearest and most effective manner of repudiating the dogma of trusteeship. The agitation for the creation of an organ for expressing organized popular opinion is perfectly constitutional. The resolution of the Lahore Congress is brushed aside by the British imperialists and those Indians, who for their sectional interests are against it, as the view of a 'vociferous minority'. We cannot disregard this attitude. We must find a way of showing in action that the resolution represents the interests and expresses the will of the overwhelming majority. Therefore the party of national revolution should appeal to the popular masses to give an organized expression to their will and aspirations. They will be asked to do so by electing a Constituent Assembly by universal suffrage as their indisputable representative. The sovereign authority of such a body is unchallengeable, except by openly discarding all regard for the established principles of democracy.

Imperialism and its Indian auxiliaries contest the representative character of the Lahore resolution, because they know that on the issue of abstract independence the Congress or any particular party will never be able to secure the active support of the masses without which the resolution will remain a mere expression of desire. Nor is it possible to organize a mass movement in support of the independence resolution with the negative slogans (boycott is a negative action) accompanying it. It can be done only when the issue of national independence is placed before the masses closely linked up with questions immediately concerning them. This will be done by the adoption of a programme of national revolution as we propose. Therefore the people shall be asked to elect a Constituent Assembly not to support the resolution declaring only for abstract national independence, but to endorse a comprehensive programme of national revolution. Abstractly put, the question of complete independence moves the masses no more than does that of Dominion Status. One is as remote from their daily drudgery as the other. Sentimental talk about national honour leaves them untouched. It is mockery to make such appeal to those lacking the most rudimentary amenities of life. Nor would the masses react more enthusiastically, if their function was to endorse an abstract conception of national independence or draft a constitution. The masses will be mobilized in the struggle for the practical assertion of the right of self-determination, when the agitation for the creation of an organ of that struggle is conducted with demands for the redress of their immediate grievances.

After the programme of the national revolution has been popularized and the slogan for the election of the Constituent Assembly issued by the party advocating that programme Committees for the election of the Constituent Assembly should be set up throughout the country. By actively demanding the redress of the burning grievances of the masses (higher wages, better labour conditions, right of strike and association etc. in case of the workers in the towns, and reduction of rents and taxes, security of tenure, control of usury etc. in case of the peasants in the village) these committees will rally around them large popular masses engaged in partial and local struggles which will be eventually developed and coordinated into a general struggle for national independence. The Constituent Assembly will thus, in the fullness of time, be elected as the organized expression of the will of the majority actively engaged in a struggle for the realization of a concrete programme. The resolution of such a democratic body growing out of a gigantic popular movement will represent the real 'National Demand' having the sanction of the militant masses behind it. According to all the established principles of democracy its resolutions will have the force of the law of the land.

Whether the government will permit the development of the movement in this way is another question. We can only find the way to our coveted goal, and resolutely travel on it. Let the enemies—foreign and native—of the people do what they want and can to stand in the way of the millions and millions of slaves fighting for freedom and the right to a human existence. Repression seldom kills a movement produced by the necessities of human progress. On the contrary, it has always quickened the revolution. What we can do is to avoid a premature clash with the enemy possessing superior forces. Let us have a clear vision of our goal and advance towards it systematically, gathering strength all the time, with courage, conviction and the will to win.

London, 1 Feb. 1930.

BRAJESH SINGH[1]
SUNDER P. KABADI[2]
ABDUL TAYAB SHAIKH[3]
RAMA SINGH[4]

Notes

[1] Brajesh Singh was the junior Raja of Kalakankar, a village near Lucknow. He became a follower of Roy when studying in Berlin and worked for him from 1928 to 1932. He paid for Roy's medical treatment in Berlin and convalescence at St. Moritz, helped him materially when Roy returned from Europe to India, went to see Roy several times in jail in connection with the latter's appeal in High Court, and then suddenly disappeared and returned to Europe early in 1933 without informing Roy or any of his friends. Subsequently he married Stalin's daughter, Svetlana.

[2] Sunder Kabadi came from a family of theosophists and was secretary of the Students' Brotherhood in Bombay before going to England in 1929. His friend Tayab Shaikh

introduced him to Roy in Berlin. He came with Brajesh Singh and Tayab Shaikh to Bombay to prepare the ground for Roy's return to India, and worked with the Royists until Roy's arrest in July 1931. Subsequently he returned to England where he earned his living as a press correspondent. In 1978 he sent me a lengthy note about his recollections of M. N. Roy in 1929–31; a slightly shortened version of this note has been included in the book *M. N. Roy: Philosopher Revolutionary*, edited by me (Calcutta, 1984).

[3] Tayab Shaikh came from the small but influential Bohra community of the Muslims of Gujarat. While studying electrical engineering in Germany he met Roy and became one of his most ardent followers. He was secretary of the Hindusthan Association of Central Europe and a delegate to the Anti-Imperialist Youth Congress. He came to India as Roy's principal organizer after the latter's break with the Comintern. During the 'thirties, while Roy was in jail, Shaikh was Roy's main outside contact in India. In 1938 he wrote and published the first biography of Roy in English—*M. N. Roy: The Man Who Looked Ahead.* However, in the late thirties, serious personal disagreements developed between him and several other 'Royists' of Bombay, especially V. B. Karnik. These sharpened after the inauguration of the Radical Democratic Party in December 1940, and in 1942 Shaikh was expelled from the R.D.P. I met Shaikh several times, first in Calcutta, and subsequently in London where he settled, and was as much impressed by his continued personal loyalty to Roy and his ideas as distressed by his intense feeling of bitterness and distrust, especially towards the Maharashtrian group of Roy's followers.

[4] Nothing is known about Rama Singh which might have been just another of Roy's many cover names. Among Roy's other Indian colleagues and disciples in Berlin, Dr Anadi Bhaduri returned to India and settled in Calcutta where I came to know him quite intimately in the fifties. He shared with me some of his recollections of the Weimar Republic years and let me read some of his handwritten entries in a personal notebook of that period. I also met another young associate of Roy of the Berlin period, Dr J. K. Banerji, who returned to Europe after spending some years in Calcutta, where he published an English periodical to which I occasionally contributed in the late forties. SNR.

Selections from
Gegen den Strom

Nos. 4–13, January–March 1930

The Crisis in the Communist International

VIII The World Situation
IX The Colonial Question: China
X The Colonial Question: China II
XI The Colonial Question: India
XII The Opposition

The Crisis in the Communist International

VIII. The World Situation*

The growth of contradictions of capitalist consolidation leads in the last resort unavoidably to the present period of 'stabilization' which will develop into a period of gigantic collapse.

On the grounds of this assessment of the world situation the 6th Congress established that in the present period the *immediate task* of the Communist parties is 'to bring the masses into a state of readiness for the decisive battle' to fight against the imperialist war peril and to defend the USSR, the Chinese Revolution and the colonial uprisings and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Events following the 6th World Congress showed that the intensity of the inner as well as the international contradictions of capitalism had been overestimated. For Marxists there can be no doubt that capitalist contradictions have not been removed by rationalization but have rather been intensified and will consequently lead to imperialist wars and revolutionary crises. But it is not necessary to call a World Congress to state anew this platitude on the laws of capitalist economy. The task is rather to assess the international situation in a more concrete way—to determine the speed and extent of the process. Have the international conflicts become so acute that in consequence the endeavours of the bourgeoisie to defer the fatal clash have been rendered useless? In order to assess the international situation correctly, it is necessary to differentiate between pacifist propaganda whose purpose it is to deceive the workers, and the aversion of the bourgeoisie itself to take a step which, in the present international situation, may open the floodgates of the revolution. Secondly, are the international conflicts so acute that a collapse is imminent? Also, do we already have an acute revolutionary crisis which is the required condition in the *advanced capitalist countries* for the proletariat to gain power? Thirdly, is the intensification of the internal conflicts a uniform process? To establish this is of the greatest importance when determining strategy and tactics of the revolutionary army. The correct evaluation of the strength and weakness of the different sections in the enemy ranks will enable the proletarian revolutionary army to attack the most vulnerable points but, at the same time, to retain in other sectors of the front the defensive position. By not adopting this strategic principle the communists are taking upon themselves the impossible task of leading simultaneously the proletariat of every country in the conquest of power.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 4, pp. 59–60, 25 January 1930. SNR.

Disregarding the fact that events have since shown that the 6th World Congress overestimated the speed and extent of the conflicts arising out of the rationalization in the capitalist economy, the 10th Plenum of the ECCI continued along the easy but deceptive road of generalizations. Its assessment of the international situation is the following:

> No negotiations or even temporary agreements whatsoever by the Macdonald government with America can remove the inevitability of armed conflict between the United States of America and England. On the contrary, they (the negotiations and agreements) will become instead, in the same way as the one-time attempts at agreement between the imperialist powers on the eve of the world war of 1914–18, a stage in its [inevitable armed conflict's] development.

This declaration was the result of a mistaken view or of a total ignorance of the facts of the international situation. No communist can believe in the pacifist views of Macdonald; but one must also understand why the English bourgeoisie has replaced the sabre-rattling of Chamberlain by Macdonald's pacifism as the external face of its foreign policy. To justify the false assessment of the international situation by the 6th World Congress, the 10th Plenum failed on the one hand to acknowledge the importance of the coming into office of the Labour Party in England, and on the other hand it focussed particular attention on the Anglo-American conflict, after it had already ceased to be the central point of today's international conflicts. Such serious mistakes are committed if one tackles a problem not on the basis of facts, but with prejudices to justify an already established theory. The practice of the current leadership to approach problems in the international situation on [the basis of] this false—non-Marxist—method is one of the many symptoms of the crisis in the Communist International.

The result of the last parliamentary elections in England and the coming to office of the Labour Government showed a radical change in the foreign policy of the English bourgeoisie. The defeat of the conservative Baldwin government meant that the bourgeoisie no longer approved the policy of Chamberlain of forming a European bloc against the USSR on the one hand and the USA on the other. During the election campaign the Labour Party laid the chief stress on foreign policy; it was elected to Parliament as the largest group not only with votes from the working class but also thanks to the support of a considerable part of the bourgeoisie. After the elections both bourgeois parties declared their willingness to support the Labour Government in the realization of their foreign policy. The main points of this policy are: 1. to achieve an understanding with the USA; 2. to dissolve the warlike mood in Europe; and 3. to re-open diplomatic relations with the USSR. In other words, the bourgeoisie completely rejected the policy which Chamberlain had carried on for 4 years. This radical reversal in England's foreign policy was dictated by two facts: 1. the fear of British imperialism of an armed conflict with its powerful opponent on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean; and 2. the failure of the attempts by the imperialist powers to put aside their rivalries and to bring about a united front against the USSR. The first is the result of the inner conflicts of British imperialism whereas the second grows out of the differences within international capitalism. That means, the logic of the facts refutes the thesis put forward by the 7th World Congress [sic. should be 6th World Congress. SNR] which was again confirmed by the 10th Plenum of the ECCI. The internal and international contradictions of capitalism do not lead directly and immediately to a 'gigantic clash'. On the contrary, they have forced the weaker imperialist powers to make concessions to the stronger ones. Thereby, on the one hand, the day of reckoning has been delayed; on the other hand, they have impeded a common armed attack against the USSR, however much world capitalism may wish to destroy this hated enemy.

The radical change in British foreign policy further means that the Anglo-American antagonism no longer forms the eye of the storm of today's capitalist world policy. It is absolutely wrong to compare Anglo-American relations today with those between England and Germany before the war and to expect that they must develop along similar lines. The balance of power in the case of the English–German differences was totally different. At that time it was a fight between two flowering imperialist states. Now, with regard to the Anglo-American differences, we are dealing with a struggle between two imperialist powers of which one is at its peak whereas the other is on the decline. It becomes obvious here that internal differences need not always bring about international conflicts along the same lines. If English imperialism had succeeded in forming a European bloc under its hegemony, then it might have been possible that the Anglo-American rivalry could have led directly to a gigantic armed conflict which, in turn, would have opened the floodgates of the revolution. But due to its internal contradictions, because it is in decline, English imperialism failed in its endeavour, and it found itself in the catastrophic danger of being involved in an isolated conflict with America. Even in the capitalist world the objective as well as the subjective factor plays its specific role. War is in the nature of the capitalist system; however, that does not mean that the bourgeoisie always and under any circumstances prepares [for] war. At certain times it fears a war and tries, therefore, to avoid it as long as possible. In such a situation British imperialism finds itself today, which causes it to carefully avoid armed conflict with its mighty rival. Under these circumstances a compromise was made possible on the Anglo-American differences through the subordination of the weaker to the stronger. The effectiveness of the objective forces is influenced by the intervention of the subjective factors. It is not a revolutionary virtue to assume that the bourgeoisie has gone completely mad and is deliberately destroying itself as a favour to us. Nonetheless, it is characteristic of the current leadership of the Comintern that it prizes this questionable virtue, namely the underestimation of the subjective factor in the capitalist world.

This deplorable attitude finds strong expression in the most recent assessment of the international situation—in Varga's 'Report on the Economy and Economic Policy in the 3rd quarter of 1929'. Because of his rather feeble attempt to direct the attention of the 10th Plenum to the realities of the international situation, Varga was attacked as the 'opportunist in our ranks'. Since then he has learned to write reports in such a way that they confirm already established theses. Thus he assures, for instance, that the 'conflict between Great Britain and the United States is the chief area of the inter-imperialist conflicts', just when a lot of events clearly disclose a re-grouping of imperialist powers. The passionate attack on France by Snowden which, besides serving the purpose of being a nationalist gesture to veil the capitulation to America, indicated the new line of British foreign policy, is interpreted by Varga as an anti-American step of British imperialism! The policy of the Macdonald government, that is, the current policy of British imperialism obviously aims at bringing about an Anglo-American bloc for the domination of the world. Whilst immediate war with America would be fatal for British Imperialism, an alliance with the considerably stronger rival would not seriously harm its widespread interests. The foreign policy of the British Empire today is dictated rather by the parasitic finance capital than by the interests of the home industry. Whereas throughout the whole of the post-war period the accumulation of capital in the mother country showed a steady downward trend, the income from colonial and foreign investments today is growing more than ever. Therefore, the parasite finance controls the situation, and it can ally itself with the American rival. The final and most convincing proof for this was the united front of the English and American delegates at the Paris conference of experts which prepared the Young Plan. Curiously, Varga claimed that the British chief delegate Stamp—who is a leading magnate and theoretician of British finance—had adopted the American point of view *only as an individual*. It is a fact that the demonstrative anti-French stance of Snowden at the Hague Conference was meant to convince America that British foreign policy had definitely broken with the Chamberlain-orientation.

In addition to the internal contradictions of British capitalism we have another factor which has removed English–American rivalry from the centre of the capitalist global policy. That is the emergence of France as a first-rate imperialist power. The international rivalries of capitalism are currently leading to a re-grouping of imperialist states around America on the one side and around France on the other. Besides its military and political domination in Europe, France is rapidly growing to be a very mighty economical factor. Indeed, France is in the stage of capitalist expansion today. In contrast to the rest of the capitalist world—including the United States—France has no unemployment, its production is growing in every sector, its state budget rests on a very sound basis, sufficient lending capital exists, bank-rates are low and its foreign trade is expanding. Here are all the signs of capitalist prosperity in one of the leading imperialist countries, thus proving how wrong the notion is that there is a period of acute crisis in the capitalist economy in the whole world.

If we therefore analyse the world situation we find that the Anglo-American differences no longer form the centre of world politics; that therefore the danger of a new imperialist war is not acute; that the newly developing balance of power (Pan-Europa led by France against the Anglo-American bloc) similarly does not mean an acute danger of war, that is, a danger on which one has to count daily; that the danger of war will only then become acute when the current process of re-grouping of the powers has been completed; that all efforts of British Imperialism to organize an armed attack against the USSR have failed; that capitalist decline is not a uniform process; and that in none of the leading capitalist countries is the economic crisis so acute that the proletariat will be able to take power immediately. The position of the capitalist economy differs from country to country. One extreme is England in the phase of absolute decline and the other is France showing all the signs of a classic capitalist rise. In between are countries with strongly varying conditions. Italy has—under fascist dictatorship—recovered from the collapse which overtook it in the years immediately following the war. Crisis and prosperity go hand in hand in Germany which has evolved—without example in history—into a type of capitalist state which, on the one hand, displays conditions of being under a sort of colonial exploitation, and on the other hand, strong traits of imperialist expansion. Finally America. The recent stock-exchange crash does not signify an acute crisis of American imperialism. It signifies something entirely different—a saturation of the internal market. For the present we do not have a general economy-crisis in the United States but a stock-exchange crash and an industrial depression. Great Britain found itself in a similar crisis during the 80s of the last century when it relinquished the policy of '*laissez-faire*' and adopted the policy of the 'constructive imperialism' preached by Joseph Chamberlain. The leaders of American imperialism headed off the crisis and made preparations to overcome it. Hoover as Minister for Trade during the last eight years formed a mighty organization for the promotion of American foreign trade. Preparing itself for a higher stage of expansion, the upper bourgeoisie indeed engineered the stock-exchange crash in the interest of monopolies. This turning point in the expansion of American capitalism aggravates the situation but does not immediately bring about either an acute revolutionary situation or acute war danger.

England has capitulated because it is incapable of withstanding the might of American imperialism. It has yielded on the only issue which could have led to an immediate armed conflict. It is the old issue of the freedom of the seas. Far more powerful than other capitalist countries, America can dictate the conditions and thus further its interests, and that at present without the aid of armed battles which are a dangerous game in the current world situation and which cannot lead to an expansion of trade. The need for the expansion of foreign trade forces America even in the direction of acknowledging the USSR. The great American press magnate Howard has just travelled through China and the USSR. He is in support of setting up a strong centralized government in China and of creating peaceful relations with the USSR which promises to become a rich field for trade and commerce. Internal and external conflicts within world capitalism oblige America to make peace with the USSR. It shows the latter's position to be an extremely strong one—the initial victory of the proletarian revolution is permanent. That is the characteristic feature of the present world situation.

The policy pursued by the current leaders of the Comintern, stressing the acute danger of a war among the imperialist countries and especially against the USSR, demonstrates their incompetence in grasping the cardinal characteristics of the world situation. It is indicative of an under-valuation of the strength of the USSR and the guarantee it represents for the development of the proletarian revolution.

Although world capitalism is unable to undo the first victory of the proletarian revolution, yet it does not find itself in such an acute crisis which would justify the current communist *offensive tactics on all fronts*. Strategy must vary according to the specific ratios of power in each country. The fighting force of the proletarian army should not be dissipated in premature attacks whilst the revolutionary crisis is still only a prospect. Instead of making the not too successful attempt of driving the masses on to the streets at every minor opportunity, the communists ought to pursue the strategy of developing the proletarian offensive out of the already given situation—in battles for concrete partial demands. However, this correct and successful strategy cannot be applied as long as the Communist Parties are conducted on the basis of a false estimate of the world situation.

IX. The Colonial Question–China*

The defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1927 was a heavy blow to the Communist International. The Communist Party of China, which had become during the previous 2 years the irresistible driving force of the revolution, was defeated so easily and practically destroyed, which greatly shocked and confused those who were not closely familiar with the situation. Not merely the proletarian masses but even the average communists around the whole world were greatly dismayed by this sudden turn of events. Throughout a whole year they had been told by the Communist Parties that the national army and the Kuomintang were their revolutionary allies who were fighting heroically for the liberation of the Chinese people from the yoke of foreign imperialism. They had been asked to give unconditional support to these agencies created by the Chinese people. Suddenly, then, the hero of the 'victorious national army', Chiang Kai-shek, was branded as an agent of foreign imperialism by the Communist International, suddenly the national army and the Kuomintang were condemned as the bloody arms of the counter-revolution. The national army had been created with the aid of the Soviet Republic. Russian communist military advisers were its brain. The Kuomintang had been supported by the Communist International, and acting according to the latter's resolutions, the communists had agreed to participate in the National Government. Taking all of this into account, the sudden reversal, of course, had a very confusing effect on the proletariat of the whole world which, following the demand of the Communist International, had supported the Chinese national revolution and had believed that victory was quite close.

On the other hand, the reasons for this sudden defeat, which revealed itself as so devastating, were not clear to the proletarian masses nor to the average communists. For months on end, as the national army moved north from its base in Canton, the communist press of the whole world reported the continuing victories of the revolution. To judge by these reports, nothing stood in the way of the final triumph of the revolution in the near future. The Wuhan government was greeted by the communists as the agent of the revolutionary democratic power. It was even featured as a step in the direction of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. How was it possible that the revolution was so suddenly and so heavily destroyed after reaching such a high phase of development and attaining such gigantic power? This question has not yet been answered satisfactorily and convincingly by the Communist International. For that reason the proletarian masses in the whole world have lost interest in the Chinese question. The occasional reports on the activity of the 'Red Army' and the 'Soviet Republics' in China, published in the official communist press, are not taken seriously. The problems of the Chinese revolution, which have not yet been solved, no longer hold the general attention.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 8, pp. 122–3; written on 15 February 1930, published on 22 February 1930. SNR.

It becomes even more difficult to understand the causes of the sudden and devastating defeat if one knows the details of the situation. When the Chinese revolution was at its peak the Communist Party of China was by no means a subordinate factor. During the years 1925–26 it had become a true people's party. In two years its membership grew from a few hundred to well over 50,000 (in addition, the Communist Youth League had a membership of 30,000). The Communist Party was the undisputed leader of the industrial workers who were organized in the more than 2.5 million members comprising trade unions. It was also the leader of the peasant movement which comprised far more peasants. Besides, the political agitation within the national army was under communist control. And the lower levels of the Kuomintang were to a large extent under communist influence. The responsibility for the ruinous defeat and virtual destruction of the party, which had taken up such a prominent position, cannot be sought in individually committed opportunist errors by the leaders at the critical moment. Nevertheless, that is the only explanation which the Communist International has given so far for the catastrophic defeat in China.

Opportunist errors which were committed by the leaders of the Communist Party of China probably form the direct cause of the defeat. However, until the roots of these fatal errors are uncovered we cannot draw the lessons from the defeat of 1927. If the leaders of the Communist International had the courage for true self-criticism, they would take upon themselves the serious responsibility with which they are now burdening Ch'en Tu-hsiu. They ought to agree with what he states in his letter recently directed to the Central Committee of the Party, 'that the main cause for the defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1925–27 was the opportunist strategy of our whole party'.[1] With this explanation the former leader of the Communist Party of China touches on the hidden sore point. He places the responsibility for the defeat in the hands of those who are really to blame—the leadership of the Communist International. The leaders of a specific section can commit at a critical moment single errors; but if it emerges that a whole party throughout a period of revolutionary development has pursued a general opportunist line, then the responsibility for the consequences of that action falls clearly to the leading agents of the International. Otherwise the Communist International would not be the centralized Party of the World Proletariat.

The desire on the part of the leaders of the Communist International to evade the responsibility for the defeat in China has prevented them from drawing the lesson from this defeat. And as it didn't produce the courage to draw the unpleasant lesson from the experienced occurrence, the Communist International therefore could not find a way out of the Chinese defeat. So as to remedy the not yet admitted past opportunism, it drove the defeated Communist Party of China into the ultra left course of putschist adventure, practically causing the destruction of the Party as an effective agent in the political life of the country.

We ought to be reminded that the founders of the Communist Party of China, including Ch'en Tu-hsiu, initially opposed the policy of joining the Kuomintang.[2] Later a reaction set in against this 'Leftist infantile disorder of communism'. Once inside the Kuomintang, the tendency of the communist leaders was to forget that the union of classes was only a means to reach the revolutionary goal. A correct tactical policy degenerated with time into pure opportunism. At every critical moment the Communist Party made concessions to the Kuomintang in order to be able to keep up the 'revolutionary' alliance of the classes in the fight against foreign imperialism. The failure of the Communist International to uncover and correct in time these opportunist aberrations shows that we are not dealing with aberrations on the part of the leaders of the Chinese Party alone, but that they had the approval for the aberrations from the international leadership. Russian comrades who worked in the China during this time were the real leaders of the Party. And they acted rather under the direction of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union than under that of the Communist International.

Thus the young Communist Party of China received its political education, which was to have such catastrophic results at the decisive critical moment, from the Comintern itself and specifically from its leader—the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. These fatal events were the result of the current system of international leadership which discourages and even positively prevents the growth of independent leading cadres in the various national sections, that is, of cadres who would be capable of contributing to the solution of specific local problems under the general leadership of the International. If the Communist Party of China, which emerged so spontaneously out of the gigantic revolutionary struggle, had been given the chance of a dynamic evolution, then it could not have been surfeited to such a measure with traditional opportunism as became noticeable in the great crisis of 1927. How such a healthy development of the Party was prevented becomes clear from the fact that the Communist Party during the two eventful years of 1925/26, when it grew so rapidly from a small propagandist group to a mighty people's party, did not call a Congress. When the problems about the social character and the perspective of the revolution became questions of practical policy; when the conditions which concerned the relationship with the Kuomintang had changed; when the class divisions had made impossible the former broad alliance of the classes; when the agrarian revolution, the arming of the proletariat, rebellion and conquest of power had been placed on the agenda through events—the Communist Party was still acting according to the resolutions which had been adopted at a time when the Communist Party was still a small group comprising a few hundred members. Furthermore, its strategy and tactics were determined by a higher authority which acted from far away Moscow on the basis of second hand information. In other words, the leadership of the Party was completely separated from, and not in the least influenced by, the revolutionary masses who had grouped together under the banner of communism. It is small wonder that the leadership is an opportunist one under such circumstances. Until the beginning of 1927 the Central Committee of a Party with 53,000 members, the leader of millions of workers and peasants, consisted of five men elected at a Party Congress which had occurred two years earlier when the party numbered 800 members. And this leading group of the Party was controlled from above by two Russian comrades with very little political competence and little revolutionary experience. Thus the Central Committee acted without influence from the revolutionary masses nor did it have the advantage of a truly revolutionary leadership.

When finally, at the beginning of 1927, the struggle against the opportunist tradition of the Party was initiated, the instructions of the Communist International and the revolutionary drive forward of the people were rejected by the Party-leadership under Borodin's influence—Borodin, who for three years was not only the actual representative of the Soviet government but also of the Communist International. Yet, today, the old Marxist, founder of the Communist Party, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, has been excluded from the Party, whilst Borodin after a year's disgrace occupies a high position, an example of Bolshevism. The former admits his errors in the past and his share in them; however, he also condemns the present adventurist policy, whereas the latter knew how to let his past be forgotten by becoming a passionate champion of the new line. All those who are today misleading the Communist Party of China acted in just that way. The Chinese Heinz Neumann—Ch'u-Chu'iu-pai—has always been a creature of Borodin under whose influence he prepared the disgraceful 'platform of retreat', in which the capitulation of the Communist Party during the revolutionary crisis of the summer of 1927 was justified. Together with Ch'en Tu-hsiu—and just like him—he had struggled against the instructions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the efforts of its representative at that time to bring the Party into the Bolshevist line during this crisis. Shortly thereafter he turned coat and became an extreme critic of opportunism, and drove the beaten Party merrily onto the reef of the putschist adventure. His colleagues among the current leadership of the party—Chou En-lai, T'sai Ho-sen, Chang Kuo-t'ao and others—are all former followers of Ch'en Tu-hsiu and just like him they are responsible for the defeat in 1927. The 'red general', Mao Tse-tung, who today is such a romantic leader of the peasant uprisings, was a determined opponent of the programme of agrarian revolution during the crisis of 1927 and not even willing to go at least as far as the leftist membership of the Kuomintang.[3] The past of these current leaders shows in what a mechanical manner the putschist policy was forced upon the Party after it had failed to make use of the revolutionary crisis. Herein, on the other hand, we also find the fundamental reason for the crisis in the Communist International. The crisis is due to the method of determining policy and tactics of the national sections, not in accordance with the specific conditions under which these have to operate, but through ordinances of a higher authority which is frequently very poorly informed about the true nature of the situation.

15 February 1930.

X. The Colonial Question–China II*

Although the Second Congress of the Communist International recognized the national liberation movement in colonial countries as an essential part of the proletarian world revolution, no serious attention was devoted to the problems of the revolutionary movements in the colonies by the International for years. The eastern division of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was left in the care of young members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In spite of their good intentions and their admirable eagerness these comrades did not comprehend the resolution of the Second Congress correctly. When Lenin penned the resolution he only possessed an incomplete knowledge of the situation in the colonial countries. Therefore he could only determine the basic principles of communist policy in this matter. On the basis of these principles then the tactical line had to be developed following the knowledge gained in practice. Comrades with practical experience in the revolutionary movements of colonial countries who attended the Second Congress submitted for consideration that Lenin slightly overestimated the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Lenin himself listened to the opinion of these comrades. As a consequence, the role of the nationalist bourgeoisie was not fully defined in the resolutions of the Second Congress. The final decision on this matter was rightly deferred until such time as the Communist International could reach it with the aid of practical experiences. In the course of time the development of the liberation movements in the colonies, especially in India, showed that the *revolutionary significance of the nationalist bourgeoisie was very slight*. Instead of applying the resolutions of the Second Congress in the light of this development, the youthful Russian communists who were directing the eastern division insisted on their literal interpretation. The communists in the colonies and the imperialist countries were not permitted to evaluate the situation as it really was. Every attempt in this respect was condemned as a tendency towards revision of the theses of the Second Congress, which obviously were not the final solution of this question.[4]

Another factor, too, contributed to confusing the issue: the immediate interest of the proletarian State (the USSR). In order to secure the friendship of the semi-colonial, oppressed peoples who lived along the border with the Soviet Union, the latter had to support the governments of these countries regardless of their class basis. The fact that the Soviet government bestowed support and aid upon Kemal Pasha, Reza Khan or Amanullah led the inexperienced Russian comrades of the eastern division of the Comintern Executive to put up the incorrect theory that the class which these people represent is a revolutionary class and that in every colonial country they therefore ought to be supported. Then there were the national republics within the Soviet Union. It was believed that the tactics of the Communist International towards the national liberation movement in the colonial countries ought to follow the same policy as that which the proletarian State applied for the purpose of destroying the bases of counter-revolution in its territories, the former colonies of the Tsarist Empire. In brief, one did not realize that the basic principles formulated in the resolutions of the Second Congress did not exclude that an alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the oppressed nations can vary according to different circumstances under which it occurs.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No.9, pp. 143–4, 1 March 1930. SNR.

When, on the basis of the theses of the Second Congress, the Chinese communists had been persuaded to join the Kuomintang, the theses became the object of such scholastic interpretations in the hands of the experts on matters of the East. The later relationship with the Kuomintang was determined by these interpretations. The relationships were developed and continued on the grounds of two kinds of considerations: to stimulate the Chinese national revolution and to promote the immediate interests of the proletarian State. These considerations were, of course, closely linked to one another. Nevertheless, there existed differences which could only be settled in the interests of both parties through a correct understanding of the principles laid down in the resolutions of the Second Congress, and after giving due consideration to the practical experiences. The immediate interests of the proletarian State demanded that the national government of China be supported unconditionally in order to persuade it to free itself from the influence of the anti-Soviet imperialist powers. In the interest of self-defence the Soviet Republic felt the need to establish friendly relations not only with the Nationalists but even with the evidently reactionary government in Peking. In order to prevent the chaotic conditions in China from becoming a source of hostile operations against the Soviet Republic by the imperialist powers, it was necessary to gain the friendship of the feudal militarists. Already, prior to Chiang Kai-shek, support against foreign attack was not only given to Feng Yu-hsiang but even to the arch-reactionary warlord Wu P'ei-fu as defenders of Chinese national independence. At one time negotiations were even taken up to establish friendly relations with Chang Tso-lin.[5] As far as the immediate interests of the proletarian State are concerned, all these diplomatic actions are justified. However, ruin set in when no distinction was made between the diplomatic manoeuvres of the proletarian State and the activity of the Communist International. The diplomatic manoeuvres of the proletarian State are one part of the activity of the Comintern; but the whole is greater than the part. In China, on the contrary, the whole was subordinated to the part. Under pressure of over-rated diplomatic considerations the Comintern's theses on the colonial question underwent an opportunistic interpretation.

During the initial years of its development the Communist Party of China was not guided by international leadership; it neither had ideological perspicacity, political schooling, a revolutionary tradition, nor an experienced cadre in order to be able to find the right way. Its activities were determined and its leading cadres were instructed by Russian communists *who did not work according to the instructions of the Communist International*. The result was a deep-rooted opportunism on the part of the leading cadres, although they grew up amidst great revolutionary battles. The leaders of the Communist Party of China learnt from their teachers at that time to rely for the means of developing the revolution rather on diplomatic manoeuvres than on mass action. Three years after having opposed the tactics of joining the Kuomintang Ch'en Tu-hsiu moved to the other extreme and defended the opportunist policy of maintaining the 'revolutionary alliance of the classes' at any price after this alliance had already been betrayed by the nationalist bourgeoisie.

In order to be able to find the person truly responsible for the defeat in China, one must understand that the actual leadership, even when the Communist Party of China was a mighty popular party, lay with the afore-mentioned advisers who acted on the instructions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Important resolutions about the activities in China, even during the fateful years of 1926/27, were not formulated by the Executive Committee of the Communist International but by the official organs of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. After the *coup* of 20 March 1926, there could be no further doubt about the character of the national army and the aim of its commander, Chiang Kai-shek. Quite clearly it emerged that the nationalist bourgeoisie was finally taking a stand against the revolution. The military expedition into the north was undertaken by it as preparation for an open assault on the revolutionary masses. The task of the Communist Party in this situation was clear. It was this: to prepare for the approaching battle, to intensify the class struggle through ruthless attacks against the feudal reaction, and to arm the masses. As the Communist Party neglected these preparatory tasks, its defeat in the eventual crisis was predictable, indeed, almost inevitable. And it was again due to unsatisfactory leadership that the Communist Party failed to prepare itself for the coming crisis. Whilst the national army was supported financially, technologically and with provisions of arms and ammunition, even after the counter-revolutionary motives of its commander had emerged quite clearly, no serious efforts whatever were made to arm the workers and peasants. One was still under the belief that the expansion of the National Government's power would mean victory for the revolution. The Communist International only condemned Chiang Kai-shek after he had massacred the workers of Shanghai. However, Chiang Kai-shek had not become a cruel counter-revolutionary overnight. Throughout a whole year he had systematically prepared for this assault on the revolution. But the Communist Party neglected to expose him, in the mistaken fear of breaking the alliance with the nationalist bourgeoisie whose revolutionary role it overestimated because of the wrong interpretation of the tenets of the Second Congress and the non-observance of practical experiences. And during these fateful days it was not Ch'en Tu-hsiu but Borodin who directed the policy of the Communist Party.

It is necessary to establish the responsibility of the Russian comrades, not individually but as the responsibility of the leading faction of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to show the damaging consequences which occur through the monopolization of the leadership of the International by a section of it, however meritorious it may be.

After the opportunist interpretation and application of a correct strategy had led to a catastrophic defeat, the new line was adopted which nearly destroyed the Party. The Party took the offensive—organizing armed uprisings and the establishment of soviets—after it had been defeated and demoralized. At a time when their shattered forces should have been contained, rallied and prepared for future actions, they were driven to such criminal adventures as the Canton rebellion.[6] The mad policy of putschism was the logical consequence of the former policy of diplomatic manoeuvres. There was little of revolutionary courage in them. It reeked rather of revenge against the nationalist bourgeoisie and the 'left' militarists who had destroyed us with our own assistance. It was the desperate action of disappointed people.

A few statistical figures can illustrate the situation. At the beginning of 1927 approximately 60 per cent of the party membership were proletarians. Party strongholds were the industrial centres such as Shanghai, Wuhan, Canton, etc. According to the report of the Central Committee the membership of the Party grew to 130,000 at the start of 1929 (the reliability of these figures is doubtful), of which only 5,000 were from city areas and of which latter approximately 30 per cent were from the lower middle classes.[7] The number of industrial workers in the Communist Party, therefore, shrank in the course of two years from 35,000 to 3,500. According to an estimate, more than 20,000 communists fell victim to the white terror during the year 1928. These victims included virtually the entire leading cadre of the Party with the exception of a half-dozen bureaucrats who were content to give radical orders from secure hideouts. A remarkable feature of this picture is that while the Communist Party was almost destroyed as an organization of the revolutionary proletariat, non-proletarian revolutionary elements gathered together under its banner in spite of the bloody terror regime. Very important political lessons ought to be drawn from this phenomenon—lessons which ought to determine the current strategy of the Communists in China.

The first lesson is the incorrectness of the new line which has led to the destruction of the proletarian elements in the Party and to the isolation of the workers from industrial centres. The second lesson concerns the social character of the revolution at its present stage. The leader of the revolution, the Communist Party, is today more a party of the revolutionary peasantry than that of the proletariat. Therefore it is a Communist Party rather in name than in substance. From this lesson follows the third—that about the immediate task of the revolution. If the overwhelming majority and the most active elements of the revolutionary army derive from the peasantry, then we are still dealing with a bourgeois–democratic revolution, and for that the immediate task consists of also gathering under its banner non-proletarian elements side by side with the proletariat. The tragic and costly experiences of the past two years confirmed that this mobilization cannot take place under such catchphrases as 'Armed Rebellion' and 'Establishment of Soviets'. Local uprisings of the peasants are nothing new in China. It is therefore nonsense to call a few thousand partisans 'Red Army' and the territories occupied by them 'Soviet Republics'. If these were signs of a proletarian revolution, then China has been in the process of the proletarian revolution from time immemorial.

We cannot expect of this bankrupt 'international' leadership which has driven the so young Communist Party of China from one extreme to another that it would learn from experience. Because in that case it would have to abdicate the exalted throne which it has usurped. Therefore, there is a crisis in the Communist International. Every attempt to help the Communist Party of China to draw the lessons from this experience is suppressed. The reappearance of Ch'en Tu-hsiu on the political scene represents such an attempt. The comprehensive criticism which he brought to bear on the policy of the Central Committee was the voice of the healthy elements who asserted themselves for the salvation of the Party. Therefore, Ch'en Tu–hsiu was excluded from the Party whilst others who are as responsible for the opportunist errors committed during the revolutionary crisis of 1927 stand at the head of the Party and are steering the leftist course leading to destruction.[8]

The total failure of the Communist Party of China to organize any kind of popular movement on the occasion of the conflict over the Manchurian railway shows how completely it has ceased to exert any political influence. This was the starting-point for Ch'en Tu-hsiu's criticism. Proceeding from this concrete issue he subjected the whole policy of the Party to a critical analysis and characterized it as 'Opportunism in a veiled (putschist) form'. In view of the very serious mistakes which he himself has committed in the past, Ch'en's criticism would have little significance had he not also subjected his own errors to a sharp critique. Just like the former diplomatic manoeuvres, the policy of the putschist adventure has also become bankrupt. Neither the one nor the other meets the requirements of the situation. The resuscitation of the Chinese Revolution from its defeat and its future development until its eventual victory depend on the growth of the leading persons who, knowing and understanding the situation, act under the general guidance of a truly international leadership. The Communist Party will regain its position as leader of the revolution when it moves away from its current strategy in order to evolve activities which are in accord with the immediate task of the revolution—namely, the mobilization of the revolutionary democratic masses under the hegemony of the proletariat.

The immediate task of the revolution is the struggle to overthrow the military dictatorship of Nanking. By organizing the fight the Communist Party will regain its role as leader of the revolution. For this purpose it must agitate that the political power be conquered by the revolutionary democratic masses who comprise both the proletariat and people of other social levels in the broadest sense. The Communist Party should agitate for the election of popular representatives by workers', peasants', artisans', small shopkeepers' and students' organizations (like those established in Shanghai at the start of 1927). Such popular bodies are to be set up at first locally, and they will then be incorporated into a national organization which embodies the revolutionary democratic might and which can successfully challenge the military dictatorship of the counter-revolutionary feudal–bourgeois clique. In that way and as an immediate prelude to the conquest of power the bourgeois democratic revolution will be fulfilled under the hegemony of the proletariat.

XI. The Colonial Question—India*

A few weeks ago the Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International demanded in a letter to the Nationalist Youth-League of India that the leader of the petit bourgeois left wing of the Indian National Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru, be excluded from the League against Imperialism. The Communist faction in the Executive Committee of the League was ordered to comply with this demand. The matter was discussed a great deal; some doubted the justness of this step. But the Terror regime was successful over these spineless men. The fear of losing their comfortable position gained the upper hand over their political conviction, if they had any in the first place. A document which condemned Nehru as a counter-revolutionary and an agent of imperialism was in preparation. Meanwhile, Nehru had got wind of the matter and wrote an arrogant letter to the League's secretariat in which he stated that he didn't care a fig what they thought of him; if they continued their noise over his political course he'd immediately resign from the League. What the little bit of sound thinking which was still to be found in the communist camp did not achieve, the arrogance of this petit bourgeois con-man did. Nehru's letter caused great consternation in the higher conclaves of the Comintern, and the communist faction in the League received an immediate *counter-instruction, viz. to defer the prospective action against Nehru.*[9]

Quite regardless of whether the proposed step to exclude Nehru was right, quite regardless also of the assessment of his role in the Indian revolutionary movement, this minor incident shows—which, as is usual in such cases, was withheld from the public by the [party] apparatus—how absolutely bankrupt the current leadership of the Comintern is, in dealing with colonial as well as other burning issues of the proletarian revolution.

Without a revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary policy. Lenin always placed the greatest stress on this principle. The moving away from this principle is the cause of the deplorable political bankruptcy of the current leadership of the Comintern. The colonial question was unfurled before the international revolutionary proletarian movement only relatively late. The theoretical basis for being able to deal correctly with this question had not been laid thoroughly by the great ideological leaders of the movement. As a relatively new issue (the issue itself is an old one, but its revolutionary treatment is new) it demanded the ability to investigate unknown territory: its specific conditions, complex class relationships, and depending on them, the peculiar form of the revolutionary struggle. In such an environment it does not suffice to operate with quotes. Here independent observation of facts and the formulation of new theoretical and political conclusions with the aid of the basic principles of Marxism are needed. As the present leadership of the Comintern and the regime installed for the purpose of maintaining its power do not allow the slightest independence of thought (within the given limits of Marxism), its political bankruptcy over the colonial question has to be worse than in all other matters.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 12, pp. 192–3, 22 March 1930. SNR.

Already in his book on Imperialism, Lenin sketched out the general rules of colonial expansion and the subjugation of whole nations as a consequence of capitalist production in other countries. Lenin's analysis of imperialism was a very important contribution to the theory of the proletarian revolution. However, it was not quite exhaustive. What he did was to open a field newly to be investigated. Rejecting the social-democratic doctrine of the 'civilizing mission' of capitalism, he showed the true nature of modern imperialism as being merely an abominable machine for the oppression and exploitation of hundreds of millions of people who populate the underdeveloped parts of the world. If the development had run a normal course, the investigations on the nature and the workings of imperialism would have had to be continued along the start made by Lenin. The results of the world war made this need all the more urgent. Imperialism had led to war. The latter has shaken the former very deeply although not bringing about its total destruction. Maintaining its fundamental nature Imperialism, however, had to attempt to bring into harmony the ways and means of its operations with the new circumstances in order to escape the consequences of the war. That is not an a priori assumption which has no place in Marxism. There are rather a lot of facts which compel one to this conclusion.

If it is correct that due to the world war capitalism as a world power has entered a period of general decline (which does not exclude erratic movements within this general process), then the individual peculiar features of post-war imperialism cannot be exactly the same as before the war. The forms and methods for the exploitation of colonial people which had developed during the period of capitalist expansion in the imperial countries, need not—indeed cannot—be appropriate for the epoch of the decline of capitalist production in the mother country. To take into account these efforts of imperialism to change internally, and in the light of that knowledge, to develop Lenin's theory of imperialism is therefore absolutely necessary for a correct treatment of the colonial question by the Comintern.

In contrast to that necessity stood the treatment of the colonial question at the Sixth World Congress, marked by the condemnation of just those attempts which aimed at discovering the specific traits of post-war imperialism and thus at obtaining a clear perspective of the development of the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples, especially the Indian people. The Sixth World Congress produced extensive theses on the colonial question which, on the one hand, absolutely failed to fulfil the most important task of the moment, viz. to draw the lesson from the Chinese experience, and on the other, which can be shown to be a bunch of contradictions dressed up with banal platitudes. As far as India is concerned, which will be during the coming era the centre of the colonial revolution, the resolution of the Sixth Congress (under the pretext of fighting against the theory of 'decolonization') rejected the view that the crisis of capitalism in the mother country forced imperialism to remove the obstacles to India's economic development to some extent; but at the same time the resolution affirmed that the nationalist bourgeoisie had crossed over to the side of imperialism, and that therefore the leadership of the national revolution fell *solely* to the proletariat. This statement is (in general) correct and corresponds to the situation; but it contradicts the assertion that the form of economic relationship between India (as a whole) and Great Britain would not change as long as India remained a colony of England. If what Bukharin (then leader of the Comintern and representative of the collective view of the Politbureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) expressed in his report were true, namely, that 'British imperialism' had 'strengthened its colonial oppression in India in general and (its oppression) *of the Indian bourgeoisie in particular*' (my emphasis, M.N.R.), then the Sixth Congress' assessment of the role of the nationalist bourgeoisie could not be true. What Bukharin remarked in the same speech, 'that it is unlikely that the Indian bourgeoisie will play a durable revolutionary role', stands in stark contrast to the view in the report that the Indian bourgeoisie is increasingly oppressed by British imperialism. In equal contradiction to the view expressed in the report stands Kuusinen's judgement that 'the policy of the Indian bourgeoisie is not a revolutionary policy.'[10] It cannot be presumed that the Indian bourgeoisie is bent on being oppressed and is altogether averse to a revolutionary policy. It has given up any serious struggle against imperialism because the policy which the latter pursues at present does no longer prevent absolutely the economic development of the Indian bourgeoisie as a class. This is shown clearly by the facts which characterize the economic relations between India and England since the world war.

Thus the standpoint, which was condemned as the 'social-democratic decolonization theory' by the Sixth World Congress, is the prerequisite for a correct assessment of the class-relations within the Indian nationalist movement.[11] It is a point of view which had developed on the basis of observation of facts from a Marxist perspective. Its chief content is that English imperialism, in consequence of the decline of capitalism in the mother country, has been forced to find ways and means to draw a greater profit out of India; for this purpose it permits India's industrial development; however, it creates through it at the same time conditions which are affecting its own foundation deeply. The leaders of the Sixth Congress saw in this point of view a contradiction. They asked: If it is so, why does British imperialism act in this way? (Kuusinen). That is a highly simplified way of considering the matter. That is an examination of the actions of imperialism without regard to the inner conflicts of capitalism. Seen from the view of such simplistic logic even Marx would appear ridiculous because he claimed that capitalism was digging its own grave. If capitalist production creates the conditions for its own downfall, why then was it introduced by the bourgeoisie? A Marxist does not pose such a childish question. But Marxist dialectics do not appear to be the strongest point of the present leadership of the Comintern.

In order to reach an accurate assessment of the situation it is necessary to differentiate between the subjective and objective factors at work in it. British imperialism does not wish to lose one bit of its power in India. This desire, however, is not the sole factor. The effectiveness of this subjective factor is limited by what British imperialism is able to do in the given situation to maintain its rule over India, and by the consequences of what it carries out in practice. The chief aim of imperialism is to draw the greatest possible profit out of the colonies. How that is accomplished is a secondary matter. The manner in which British financiers obtain profits from Canada and Australia is different from the way in which it draws these from the eastern or West African colonies. The methods of exploitation applied here are again not the same as in India. The difference is not only one of location but also a temporal one. Today's methods of drawing profits from Canada and Australia are not the same as used previously. There are no grounds at all why the ways and means of British exploitation in India too would not have undergone the same change in the course of time because of changed conditions under which exploitation occurs.

Instead of regarding imperialist exploitation as an unvariable process, a Marxist has to analyse it dialectically. In such an analysis what he should focus on is not the exact number of industrial workers or of furnaces in India, or any other colonial country. Primarily it is necessary to discover the general trend of the development. Is India, politically and economically, in exactly the same situation as obtained, for instance, twenty-five years ago? Do the forms and methods of exploitation which were used then correspond to today's needs of British imperialism? Has any internal change occurred in the position of British imperialism which forces it to apply new forms and methods to gain profit from India? Is British imperialism after the war in a position to continue the colonial exploitation as in pre-war times? These are the fundamental questions to be examined in order to be able to arrive at a correct assessment of the situation in India; and without such an assessment the communists will never be able to accurately determine their political line.

The essential point of the whole situation is to be found in the internal position of English imperialism. The protracted debate at the Sixth World Congress ended with a contradictory resolution because it did not touch this essential question. Export of capital is the basis of modern imperialism. Today, we do not get very far with this fundamental principle alone. What happens to an imperial state if its ability to export capital declines? Here begins the process of disintegration; but imperialism does not wait fatalistically for its destruction. It attempts to save itself from the crisis. Thus imperialism continues its existence (till its destruction through a revolution) but no longer on the basis of a continuous export of capital. Forced to find a new basis, it has to create new forms and methods of exploitation of the colonial peoples. In consequence of the war British imperialism has entered this phase. British rule over India would have to cease automatically if export of capital were the *sine qua non* of modern imperialism. Since the war the accumulation of capital in England has been on a downward spiral. The available surplus for export is very small. England can no longer export sufficient capital without serious damage to the home industry. This means that British imperialism can no longer exist on the basis of export of capital without undermining its own foundations. Nevertheless, British imperialism still remains a world power which has to be fought.

On the other hand, India has long since ceased to display all those conditions which, according to Lenin (in 1914) were the characteristic features of a colony of modern imperialism. There is no shortage of capital in the India of today. On the contrary, it is there in plenty only waiting to find a productive application. Other features still exist: land prices are relatively low, wages small and raw materials cheap. But its inability to export capital makes it impossible for England to profit from these circumstances. This can only be achieved in one way, namely, through the mobilization of the at present inactive capital in India under the hegemony of the imperialist financiers.

India's colonial exploitation in these new circumstances, which have been caused by the internal disintegration of British imperialism, creates a basis for collaboration between the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism. The transformation of the accumulated wealth in India into productive capital leads inevitably to a modern industrial development of the country. Through this the demands of the national bourgeoisie will at least be partly satisfied. The opportunity for the development of its class within the framework of imperial supervision of course deters the nationalist bourgeoisie from risking a revolution. It acts according to the proverb: A sparrow in one's hand is better than a pigeon on the roof.

The capitulation of the nationalist bourgeoisie, however, does not alter fundamentally the social character of the national revolution; the latter still remains a bourgeois-democratic one and as such has to be developed with a corresponding programme. The class-basis of the revolution will not be restricted exclusively to the proletariat or the peasantry. The bourgeoisie whose interests are satisfied by the new form of imperialistic exploitation represents a very small part of the population. Between it and the working-class there is a large mass of people who have not yet betrayed the fight for national liberation. Therefore it is absolutely wrong to state that the nationalism represented by the National Congress is counter-revolutionary. Those communists who are of this view (namely, that the nationalism represented by the Congress is not counter-revolutionary) are condemned by the present leaders of the Comintern as 'renegades'; but the arrogance of the petit-bourgeois nationalist leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, drives them into a corner. This demonstrates how absolutely uncertain their policy is in India where just at this moment a revolutionary mass-movement is developing which requires a clear-sighted determined leadership.[12] Behind radical phrases which go far beyond the necessity of the situation lurks the spectre of opportunism.

XII. The Opposition*

After the stage had been set by Manuilski, Stalin himself appeared on it in order 'to fight against two fronts'. In his sensational article he announced that he would challenge the 'fantastic exaggerations' during the collectivization of agriculture in the USSR.[13] The changes in strategy of the International have always been the result of a change in the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was therefore to be expected that the ultra-left adventures into which the Communist International had been driven by the Stalinist leadership would also undergo certain criticism.

The resolution of the Plenary meeting of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which was published a few days after the appearance of Stalin's article, made an attempt at relinquishing the theory of an imaginary 'third period'.[14] According to the estimates of the Sixth World Congress and the Tenth Plenum, the general state of affairs was 'acutely revolutionary' which would lead 'directly to a gigantic crash'. The new resolution speaks of an 'economic crisis' which takes on 'a multitude of forms, degrees and characters in which the crisis appears in the individual countries'. On the basis of this entirely different evaluation of the general state of affairs in the world the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International proposes a strategic line which—*if applied seriously*—would mean total abandonment of the entire ultra-left course which has been pursued during the past two years. The resolution states for instance: absolutely necessary is 'a change in the format and methods of operation of the Communist Parties, according to the tasks of leadership of mass actions. . . . whereby attention has to be given to the appropriate preparation of these mass actions.' Furthermore, 'in today's situation, work in the reformist unions . . . for the liberation of the working masses from the influence of reformist traitors gains particularly great significance.' If these directives have been made seriously and if they are acted on accordingly, then soon we ought not to hear any more about the theory of 'social-fascism', and the Communist Parties could return to the Leninist strategy—the winning of the masses as a pre-condition for the battle for power.

This development signifies the success of the communist Opposition.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, No. 13, pp. 208–9, 29 March 1930. SNR.

However, we should have no illusions. The Comintern is still far from having overcome the crisis. And it will not emerge from this dead-end street on the initiative of those people *whose leadership has brought it into the present deplorable state of affairs*. What the development shows up is the *absolute bankruptcy of the current leadership*—not individually, *but as a system*. This confirms the correctness of our strategy against the ultra-left adventures, even risking the formal and temporary exclusion from the Party. *The ultra-left leadership will collapse; but it does not admit its mistakes*. It tries to obtain a new lease of life by passing the responsibility on to the shoulders of the 'sub-lieutenants' acting under its orders. Therefore *the task of the Opposition is not yet complete*; it will not be complete even if the present leadership of the International completely changes its course. The *whole system of the leadership must be altered* before the Comintern can recover from the present crisis which is a crisis of the leadership. As long as the *present system* is maintained, namely the *determination of the policy of the whole International on the grounds of the needs of the struggles within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under post-revolutionary conditions*, no end to the crisis is foreseeable.

What does Stalin wish now? He is manoeuvring partly to make the platform of the right his own after having pushed the spokesmen for this platform out of the leadership of the Party and thus also out of the International. He had played the same trick on Zinoviev and Trotsky. He now does the same to Bukharin, Tomski, Rykov etc.[15] He now declares wisely: 'Collective production cannot be achieved by force. That would be stupid and reactionary . . . The tempo and method of collectivization must be determined by making allowance for the diversity of conditions . . .' According to our information, Bukharin did not criticize the policy of collectivization of agriculture in principle; the difference between him and Stalin consisted of the matter of the tempo and method. For that he was branded as the ideologist of the rich farmers. If what Bukharin and his followers represented was an opportunist deviation in the struggle for establishing socialism, then Stalin is proposing the same route today after costly experiments have proved that the tempo of collectivization cannot be enforced. However, the danger exists that in reaction to his previous policy he may go beyond that which his opponents of enforced collectivization had wanted.

Of course Stalin is too clever to admit his mistakes as being the ground for the retreat proposed by him. His logic is remarkable. He declares that the collectivization of farming has been far more successful than expected. Therefore, the tempo must now be reduced! In his article he informs us that '50 per cent of farms have already been brought under the collective system'. Hence, within two years the

Five-Year-Plan (in regard to agriculture) has been accomplished to 200 per cent! It sounds like a fairy-tale. But Stalin himself tells us what actually is true—it was an 'adventurist attempt' which has collapsed. It was a 'stupid and reactionary' attempt to wish to collectivize farm production by force. Stalin himself admits that many of the great achievements do not exist in reality but 'in bureaucratic decrees, resolutions on the growth of collective farms, and the organization of collective production on paper'.[16]

The fundamental conditions for the socialist reform of farming in the Soviet Union are the financial resources available to the proletarian state. Socialization of agricultural production through the introduction of machines—which is the real objective of the proposed collectivization plan—cannot occur fast enough if sufficient capital for it is not available. Many of the 'achievements' which Stalin announces so triumphantly appear only on paper (as he himself admits) because of lack of capital. In order to balance these impediments 'bureaucratic decrees' were issued, which Stalin denounces today as 'stupid and reactionary'. This characterization is quite correct but comes too late. His functionaries had to work with 'bureaucratic decrees' because they had no other arms to execute the orders given to them, and failure in executing the orders, indeed merely doubting their practicability, would have placed them into the situation of being suspected of 'rightist deviations' and of having to face the consequences for that. Now the General places all guilt for the wrongly-conducted campaign at the door of his obedient sub-lieutenants and demands a strategic retreat in order to preserve reputation.

After the basis for socialism has been laid in the industrial sector of the Soviet economy, farming has to be lifted from individual to collective production. However, no illusions should be prevalent here. In the present conditions of the country this process must be a slow one. The coat must be tailored according to the size of the cloth available for it. Stalin appears to realize that now; but as a weapon in the factional fighting for the leadership of the Party he tried to force the process and consequently forced upon the whole of the International this crazy ultra-left policy. In order to remove Bukharin and others from the leadership of the Party he promoted a policy which was impracticable. We do not claim that Bukharin's viewpoint was absolutely correct. Nevertheless, it is clear now that Bukharin and his followers were not such 'bourgeois liberals' as they had been made out to be. If these conflicting views had been placed before the whole Party and the International in their totality for an objective evaluation, the communist ranks would not have been decimated today by internal strife; the leading cadre of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as well as the International would not be as seriously weakened as it has been through the expulsion of old experienced men in favour of opportunist adventurers shouting radical phrases.[17] If the principle of internal party democracy had been followed then we, with the united forces of the entire Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the energetic aid of the entire International, would have found the right way for the development of the Soviet economy.

However complete and effective the course change may be inside the USSR, it will not be so internationally. The resolution of the Presidium does indeed give up the ultra-left theory and practice which had been criticized and condemned by the Opposition. In spite of this it confirms the hate campaign against the 'rightists' and declares shamelessly that the official attitude towards the Opposition has been justified by events. However, no fight against ultra-left sectarianism, against romantic avant-guardism can be taken seriously, if no beginning is made through re-acceptance into the Party and the leadership of those who had the courage to raise their voice against the deviation. Obviously that is not going to happen. The battle will be fought on two fronts. If you still wish to fight against those who have fought throughout the whole time against the ultra-left, then your battle against the ultra-left is surely a trick. Therefore, a true change in strategy of the International can no longer come from above. It has to come from below. The International will definitely not abandon the present theory of avant-guardism according to Stalin's bidding who enforced this theory. The International will only do so under pressure from the masses.

The ultra-left policy is collapsing everywhere. It has ruined one party after another. The only moral basis for it was its 'shining success' in the USSR! Now the bubble has burst. Stalin himself has achieved this. Thus the basis for a real change in the direction of the Comintern has been created. The conditions for overcoming the crisis are right.

The role of the Communist Opposition becomes more important than ever at this moment. It must not only indicate the way by which the Communist Party can win the confidence of the majority of the proletariat; it must at the same time struggle against the danger of disintegration of the Communist Party itself which has been caused by the collapse of the ultra-left policy. The development of the Communist Opposition as a gathering point for all sound elements of the whole movement cannot be uniform. It has to take different directions in different countries, determined by specific conditions. In Sweden, for instance, the great majority of the party is in the Opposition. In such a case, provided that the majority of the membership after exclusion from the official Party stays indeed in the Opposition, the Opposition does not constitute itself as a second Communist Party. It functions as *the* Communist Party after the official group has been reduced to a factional unit. As a rule, however, the Opposition will represent a minority whose aim it is to gain the masses not for itself but for the banner of the Communist Party.

As soon as it comprises the majority of the Communist Party, it stops being the Opposition. It becomes the Communist Party. The Party is more than a unit. It is the point where the most advanced section of the class gathers. Therefore, communists cannot be placed outside the revolutionary party through a simple decree by a bureaucratic machine. The Opposition is an inseparable part of the Communist Party, fighting to rid it of the present ultra-left leadership. The only way to accomplish this is to break down the apparatus by introducing new blood into it.

An intense capitalist offensive, the consequences of rationalization, the treachery of the social-democratic leaders, the bitter experiences of the coalition government—all of these factors free the proletarian masses from reformist illusions and urge them objectively towards communism. Yet they still have to be led through successive stages of sectional and defensive battles before they can be mobilized for the final struggle for the conquest of power. The Communist Parties under their current leadership have not understood how to adapt to the conditions of the struggle in which the masses find themselves today. Therefore, they remain isolated from the masses although all conditions are in their favour. Thanks to the stupid strategy of the official communist leadership the organized workers are still on the side of the social democrats in spite of their growing abhorrence of them; and on the other hand, we notice the trend among the backward strata of the proletariat to come under fascist influence. The function of the Communist Opposition at this moment is to bridge the gulf which exists between the Communist Party and the masses who are evolving slowly but surely towards revolutionary power struggles.

The Opposition grew out of the crisis of the Comintern; that crisis, however, will only then be overcome when the historical task of the Opposition has been accomplished—when the Communist Parties are no longer led by an irresponsible bureaucratic machine but by the well-considered will of the revolutionary avant-guard of the proletariat.

Notes to sections VIII to XII of 'The Crisis' series

[1] Ch'en Tu-hsiu (1879–1942), one of the founders of the Chinese Communist movement and General Secretary of the Communist Party of China since its inception, was removed from office, under Moscow's order, in August 1927. On 28 July 1929 he addressed a letter to the Central Committee of the CCP strongly criticizing the Party's policy, and was thereupon expelled from the Party. On 10 December 1929 he addressed 'A Letter to all Comrades of the Communist Party' (*Kao ch'uan-tang t'ung-chih-shu*) from Shanghai. Roy's reference is to this document which he might have received directly from Ch'en Tu-hsiu and which was subsequently published in a Russian translation in *Biulleten Oppozitsii*, No. 15–16, Sept.–Oct. 1930, pp. 19–33. An English translation was later published in *The Militant*, New York, 15 November and 1 December 1930; 15 January and 1 February 1931. In October 1932 Ch'en was arrested by the Kuomintang and sentenced to imprisonment. He was released in 1937 and died in 1942. During his last years he became an outspoken critic of all varieties of totalitarianism (including Communism) and an advocate of democracy.

Y. C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West 1872–1949*, Chapel Hall, North Carolina, 1966; Julie Lien-Ying How, 'The Development of Chen Tu-hsiu's Thought 1915–1938', M. A. Thesis, Columbia Univ., 1949.

[2] Ch'en was initially against the Comintern policy of Communist–Kuomintang alliance, but he was pressurized and persuaded by high-power Comintern agents like Maring and Borodin into acceptance of the Comintern's policy. By the time Roy reached China, Ch'en had already become a whole-hearted supporter of the alliance, and he backed Borodin against Roy. Although Roy sharply differed from Ch'en in 1927, his references to him in his writings are friendly and respectful.

Jacques Guillermaz, *A History of the Chinese Communist Party 1921–49*, London, 1972; Conrad Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China 1924–1927*, Harvard, 1958; R. C. North and Xenia J. Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, Berkeley and LA, 1963; M. N. Roy, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China*, Calcutta, 1946.

[3] According to one account, a proposal from Mao for redistribution of land was 'killed at the Committee stage' of the Fifth Congress. (C. Brandt, B. Schwartz and J. K. Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, Harvard, 1952). However, Mao accepted the office of Chairman of the All-China Peasants' League (May 1929), and tried to protect the families of the Kuomintang army officers and their properties against attack by rebellious peasants (C. Brandt, op. cit). He complied with the official policy 'in late May and early June 1927 by checking the peasant rebellion at Changsha and in neighbouring areas' (Robert C. North, *Chinese Communism*, London, 1966, p. 98). It was Roy's impression that at the time of the Fifth Congress Mao belonged to the right wing of the CCP leadership (Roy, op. cit., p. 615). According to another account, 'Mao Tse-tung, who was ill and lost his right to vote, retired from the Congress' (Guillermaz, op. cit., p. 134). Mao later claimed that he had opposed Chen and Borodin, but presumably this was not articulated in the Fifth Congress. The Roy–Borodin disagreement, with Chen supporting Borodin, is recorded in every contemporary report and recollection, but I have not found so far a contemporary reference to Mao's opposition to Borodin's policy.

[4] The Second Congress of the Communist International (1920) adopted both Lenin's Theses on the National and Colonial Question and Roy's Supplementary Theses, after they had both been amended in the National and Colonial Commission. The unresolved issues were raised virtually in every subsequent Congress. For details see *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Vols. I and II.

[5] During the twenties much of China was divided among various warlord-coalitions. The more important among these warlords were: Wu P'ei-fu (controlled Honan and Hupei); Chang Tso-lin (held Manchuria); Feng Yu-hsiang (in North-West China); and Sun Ch'uan-fang (controlled East China from Shanghai to Nanch'ang). Moscow backed the

Kuomintang and its government at Canton while having diplomatic relations with the war-lord ruled government in Peking. It also cultivated different warlords at different times as its interests required.

Guillermaz, op. cit. For the succession of war-lords in Peking, H. F. MacNair, *China in Revolution*, Chicago, 1931.

[6] After the debacle of July 1927 and the departure of Borodin and Roy, two new agents sent by Stalin were instructed to organize insurrections in China. Twenty-nine year-old Georgian Besso Lominadze initiated the Nanch'ang uprising in August; but the insurrectionary troops were quickly defeated and put to flight by General Chang Fa-K'uei. In December twenty-six year-old Berliner Heinz Neumann staged an uprising in Canton. The Canton Commune lasted barely two days. Chang Fu-K'uei's Ironsides crushed the uprising forthwith, and slaughtered some 6,000 people in Canton in four or five days. R. C. North, *Moscow and the Chinese Communists*, Stanford, 1953.

[7] Strakhov (Tsiu Vito), who represented the Chinese Communist Party in Moscow and had become a member of the ECCI and its Presidium at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, gave in an article in *Inprekorr*, July 1929, a CCP membership of 134,000 of which 5,000 were urban workers. 'The percentage of industrial workers in the CCP had fallen from 65 in 1927 to 9 at the end of 1929.' Piatnitsky reported that the 'CCP was threatened in 1928–9 with the danger of becoming a peasant party ... in the cities it almost lost touch with the broad masses of the workers'. Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, London, 1971, Vol. III, p. 1.

[8] Following upon the open break between the Left Wuhan government and the Chinese Communist Party, Heinz Neumann called a secret conference in the Japanese concession area of Hankow which was held on 7 August 1927, under the chairmanship of Ch'u Ch'iu-pai. Ch'en Tu-hsiu was not informed; out of 13 party members who attended only 3 belonged to the Central Committee. The Conference condemned Ch'en Tu-hsiu and T' an Ping-shan, and removed them from positions of leadership. The new ruling clique included Ch'u Ch'iu-pai, Li Li-san, Hsiang Chung-fa, Chou En-lai and Liu Shao-ch'i. The new committee functioned from the French and the Japanese Concessions in Hankow. After the disaster of the Canton uprising, the CCP was almost wiped out, except for the remnants who had, under the leadership of Mao and Chu Teh, withdrawn to the Chingkangshan mountain hideouts, Li Ang, *Hung-se wu-t'ai* (*The Red Stage*), Chungking, 1942, cited by R. C. North, *Moscow and the Chinese Communists*, pp. 110–12.

The Sixth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held in Moscow at the same time as the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (July–Sept. 1928). The former duly endorsed the resolutions of the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth ECCI Plenums, admitted that the party organizations in the cities were shattered, and resolved that winning over the masses was essential but that this was synonymous with preparation for armed insurrection. Moscow chose Li Li-san to execute its ultra-left line in China, but when that policy aborted the entire blame was put on Li Li-san who was called to Moscow (Nov. 1930) where he would spend the next fifteen years.

C. Brandt. B. Schwartz and J. K. Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, Harvard, 1952; *Rate China; Dokumente der Chinesischen Revolution*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1934.

[9] The Open Letter from the Communist Youth International (KIM) to the All-India Youth Congress and to All Young Workers and Peasants of India was published in *Inprecor* X, 2, 9 Jan. 1930, pp. 25–6. It asked the addressees to sever their contact with the National Congress and the Independence for India League which were declared to be 'assistants of British imperialism'. Shortly before that Viren Chattopadhyay, Secretary of the League Against Imperialism, had written a letter (4 Dec. 1929) to Jawaharlal Nehru, a member of the executive of the League Against Imperialism, accusing him of 'betrayal of the Indian masses' (Letter quoted in M. Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography*, London, 1959, p. 114). Nehru, who was also one of the founders of the Independence for India League, and who had been elected President of the Congress in 1929, reacted strongly, and directed in April 1930

that the Congress sever all connections with the League Against Imperialism. For details of the Communist Youth International, Willi Muenzenberg, *Die Dritte Front*, 1930; and R. Schuller, *Geschichte der K. J.-I.*, 5 vols., 1931.

[10] For the Theses and Proceedings of the Sixth Congress, *Protokoll des 6. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale, Juli-September 1928*, 4 Vols., Hamburg, 1928. For Bukharin's Report and Speeches, Theses on Colonies, and Kuusinen's Report and Speeches, see following issues, particularly of *Inprecor*: VIII, 41, 49, 59, 68, 81, 83 and 88.

[11] For elaboration of Roy's view of 'decolonization', see the following earlier sections in this volume: 'Draft Resolution on the Indian Question', 'On the Indian Question in the Sixth Congress of C.I.'; and 'My Crime'.

[12] The Civil Disobedience Movement was formally launched on 12 March 1930 with Gandhi's march to Dandi to break the Salt laws. A campaign for non-payment of taxes and land revenue was started in Gujarat, U.P., North-West Frontier Province and the Midnapur district of Bengal. Before the end of the year more than a million people participated in the movement, and about seventy-five thousand men and women were imprisoned. Hundreds were killed in police firing and many were wounded by bullets and lathi-charges. The first phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement came to an end with the Gandhi–Irwin Pact of March 1931.

B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Pt. IV, Ch. II; Pt. V, Ch. I; R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, Bk. IV, Ch. VI; Webb Miller, *I Found No Peace, The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent*, New York. 1936; *Condition of India, Report of the India League Delegation*, London, 1932.

[13] On 2 March 1930 *Pravda* published Stalin's article 'Giddiness from Success'. Having eliminated all his rivals in the Bolshevik Old Guard, Stalin was now in a position to present himself as a moderate. The article was followed by a new Central Committee decree of 15 March 1930 which announced that 'the Kolkhoz movement must be based on the principle of voluntary acceptance'.

A. Avtorkhanov, *Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party*, Munich, 1959, pp. 158–65; Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, London, 1970, pp. 388–9.

[14] An Enlarged meeting of the Presidium of the ECCI took place from 8 to 28 February 1930. Some of its resolutions were published in *Inprekorr* X, 23, 7 March 1930. The meeting also heard and approved Molotov's Report on the Situation in the USSR.

[15] On 30 September 1928 Bukharin published in *Pravda* his 'Notes of an Economist (At the Beginning of the Economic Year)'. It offered a critique of Stalin's economic policy and argued that 'the greatest sustained advance is achieved when industry develops on a basis provided by a rapidly growing agriculture'. Bukharin was not opposed to collectives or cooperatives, but he advocated a slowing-down of the pace of industrialization to enable agriculture to catch up. On 30 January 1929 he made a declaration to a joint session of the Politbureau and the Party Central Control Commission in which he attacked Stalin's agricultural policy, the 'intolerably rapid tempo of industrialization', the regime of unconditional discipline and 'the replacement of the control of a collective organ by the control of an individual'. On 9 February, Bukharin's declaration was reaffirmed in a joint statement by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky. In April 1929 the Central Committee of the Party condemned this declaration and 'decided to deprive Bukharin and Tomsky of the posts occupied by them in *Pravda*, in Comintern, and in the Trade Union Central Council'. E. H. Carr, *Foundations of A Planned Economy 1926–29*, Vol. I, 1974, pp. 95 ff; Vol. 2, 1976, pp. 93–7.

[16] The quotations are from the *Pravda* article of 2 March 1930, 'Giddiness from Success', included in the Russian edition of the Collected Works of Stalin, *Sochineniya*, Vol. XII, pp. 191–9. The respite which followed the article and the Central Committee decree proved, however, to be only temporary. Between April and September 1930 the percentage of collectivized farms dropped from 58 to 21. However, the policy was reversed

at the Sixteenth Party Congress (June–July 1930), and in 1931 the percentage of collectivized farms was once again 52.7. In 1932 a famine struck the villages of the Soviet Union which lasted till 1933. However, by 1934 'nearly three-quarters of all farms had been collectivized'. Schapiro, op. cit., p. 389.

[17] According to Molotov's Report to the 16th CPSU Conference (23–29 April 1929), 'even among members and candidates of the ECCI elected at the Sixth (Comintern) Congress seven are now outside the Communist ranks'. SNR.

Selections from
Gegen den Strom, Arbeiter Politik, INKOPP and *Revolutionary Age*

Manifesto of the Revolutionary Vanguard, July 1930

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Manifesto of the Revolutionary Vanguard . . . in India—From: *M.N. Roy, the Man Who Looked Ahead,* July 1930

Introductory editorial note

An account of *Gegen den Strom* has already been provided in an earlier introductory editorial note. As regards other Communist Opposition periodicals from which Roy's articles have been included in this volume, *Arbeiter Politik* 'was published first in Leipzig, later in Berlin. It was a weekly during 1929–30, a daily in 1931 and partly in 1932 (probably until February), and thereafter again a weekly. The last number published was No. 7 in 1933'. The Labour Movement Library and Archive in Copenhagen has a microfilm of this periodical of the years 1929–31 (missing 1931 April–June) and 1933.

INKOPP (Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition) started publication in February 1930 from Berlin as a monthly German organ of the Communist Opposition, with M. N. Roy and August Thalheimer as editors. During 1930 ten issues in a mimeograph edition came out, some of them as double issues. In 1931 it became a printed periodical, but after Roy's arrest in India (July) publication of the Journal also stopped in Berlin. During 1930 an English edition of INKOPP was also brought out from New York with the following legend inscribed on its masthead:

> *International Information of the Communist Opposition*
>
> *Issued under instructions of the representatives of the International Opposition*
> by M. N. Roy and August Thalheimer
> Berlin, Wilhelmstrasse 135 I.
> English Edition: Revolutionary Age,
> 37 East 28 Street, New York, U.S.A.

Mimeographed INKOPP's size was quarto, the printed edition's octavo.

The Revolutionary Age, founded in November 1918, was originally the organ of the Boston Left Wing of the American Socialist Party. After the formation of the Communist Party of the USA (Sept. 1919) it was replaced by *The Communist*. In November 1929 *Revolutionary Age* was revived as the organ of the Communist Party of the USA (Majority Group)—which then formed the Communist Opposition in the United States. It also brought out from New York an English edition of *INKOPP* in 1930. The name of *Revolutionary Age* was changed to *Workers Age* in January 1932. The last issue appeared on 23 January 1941.

SNR.

The Direction of the Indian Revolution*

The political situation in India is developing into a revolutionary crisis. This process, however, because of the complex class-relationships in India, does not move in a straight line. The specific feature of the present situation is the growing class-differentiation. The nationalist movement has split into two factions; the one [which is] still unclear is [nonetheless] revolutionary in its development, whilst the other is beginning to form a united front with English imperialism against the peril of the growing revolution. The process of class-differentiation is occurring under pressure from two opposing forces. On the one hand, the growing revolutionary activity of the masses is impelling the national bourgeoisie; on the other hand, British imperialism is making room for the development of a national capitalism and in this way attempting to remove the Indian bourgeoisie from the fight for national liberation.

Between national capitalism and the fighting masses there stands another factor in the Indian nationalist movement. In the given circumstances in the country the urban petit bourgeoisie, especially the intellectuals, play a very important role. Politically they are the most active element, and it is an undeniable fact that up to now they monopolize the leadership of the radical wing of the movement including the working class. To illustrate this situation let me mention a very important event in recent times. During the last two years there has evolved within the Indian Trade Union Congress a powerful left wing which stands in opposition to the reformist leadership which is under the influence of the English Labour Party, the Amsterdam International and the Labour Office at Geneva. And although the communists are the most active part of this left wing, it is however more strongly influenced by petit bourgeois nationalist radicalism than by communism. Last year a petit bourgeois nationalist radical, Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the left wing of the National Congress, was elected president of the Trade Union Congress. This year (1929) at its December meeting the Trade Union Congress split. The reformist leaders left the Congress because they were in a minority there. But this decisive victory of the left wing led to the election of another petit bourgeois nationalist leader (to whom fascist tendencies are also attributed) for the presidentship of the Trade Union Congress!

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, year 3, No. 2, pp. 25–6, 11 Jan. 1930. Signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

Without this third factor the process of class-differentiation in the nationalist movement would more rapidly climax in a revolutionary crisis for which the prospect has been opening up for the last several years. But in one way or another this factor too must contribute to the maturing of the revolutionary crisis. During the initial phases of the revolution in a colonial country the nationalist petit bourgeoisie has to move towards the left. In the circumstances of political oppression and economic bankruptcy under which it lives, it cannot come to any acceptable compromise with foreign imperialism and the national reaction. During the past years thus the radicalization of the petit bourgeoisie, and particularly of the intellectuals, has developed alongside the growing revolutionary activity of the fighting masses. Several times already it seemed that the union of the two forces was accomplished. The result of the last meeting of the National Congress in December indicated that the radicalization of the petit bourgeoisie had grown into an open revolt against the policy of compromise of Indian capitalism with English imperialism. The necessary consequence of this fateful step which the petit bourgeoisie has taken will bring the movement closer to the fighting masses. A *revolutionary-democratic bloc*, which will comprise more than 80 per cent of the population under present Indian conditions, is being formed. It is clear that this will open up the prospect of a revolutionary crisis which, in its progress, will decisively influence further developments. But the operation has to proceed step by step.

Whilst the growing activity of the masses is undoubtedly the main characteristic of the situation, the intervention of English capitalism led by the Labour Government has directly aggravated the situation. Two years ago the English parliament installed the so-called Simon Commission which was to examine in India the required measures for a so-called 'self-government'. The Commission was made up exclusively of Englishmen; not one Indian was amongst them. Therefore it was not only boycotted by the petit bourgeoisie of the National Congress, but also by a considerable number of the right wing of the national big bourgeoisie. The report of the Simon Commission will be published in the following spring.

In order to strengthen the Commission against the National Congress it was necessary to strike a blow against the national opposition which had gathered under the rally cry of boycott, to break the united front, to win the big bourgeoisie for the proposals of the Simon Commission. The required step was not difficult. One generous gesture of imperialism sufficed to free the big bourgeoisie from the half-heartedly formed alliance with those forces who could at any time kindle a dangerous fire. Two months ago the Indian Viceroy on the instruction of the Labour Government issued an official declaration that the English Government would grant Dominion Status (that is, full self-government within the British Empire) and that after the publication of the report of the Simon Commission representatives of the Indian national movement would be asked to a conference with the English Government in London to decide the political future of India. This gesture was far more effective than what Imperialism had expected. Not only the leaders of the right wing of the Nationalists who had participated in the boycott of the Simon Commission but also all outsiders among the leaders of the petit bourgeoisie of the National Congress greeted enthusiastically the declaration of the Viceroy and declared their readiness to attend the promised conference. That evoked a serious crisis in the National Congress.

In 1927 when the boycott of the Simon Commission was decided on by the National Congress, the Congress had also resolved to demand complete independence. In order to maintain a united opposition against the Simon Commission, the leaders of the right wing induced Congress in 1928 to relinquish the resolution of the previous year for total independence and to demand, in its stead, Dominion Status. Gandhi, who always appeared as the agent of the big bourgeoisie, could retain his influence on the petit bourgeois representatives by means of his demagogic posture of giving an ultimatum to the British Government. Congress resolved to make Dominion Status its demand provided that it be granted before the end of 1929. The Manifesto of the nationalist leaders in reply to the Viceroy's declaration revealed the swindle of this 'ultimatum'. The Viceroy did not meet the demands of the National Congress. An extraordinary conference was to take place in mid-1930, and even for that no binding promise was made to grant Dominion Status. Also those leaders of the National Congress including Gandhi who, a year ago, had persuaded the simple-minded petit bourgeoisie to support the fake ultimatum, capitulated. This deed by the leaders caused consternation in the ranks of the National Congress and threatened to break into an open revolt against them. The tactical skilfulness of imperialism was successful; it placed the buffer-group of the national movement into a very tricky situation. Such leaders as Gandhi and the elder Nehru, who for years had restrained the petit bourgeois nationalists from a revolutionary path, could now no longer fulfil their task. They had to make up their minds. After endeavouring in vain at the eleventh hour to obtain some kind of promise from English imperialism which would have enabled them to soothe the National Congress, they decided in favour of radicalism as a way out of the cul-de-sac.

Instead of being toppled by their followers—which would probably have been the case if they had attempted to persuade Congress to accept their reformist policy—they took recourse to cheap demagogy hoping, on the one hand, to deceive the petit bourgeois masses and, on the other, to dupe the imperialist rulers. Reluctantly they swam with the rising tide of the revolution, hoping that as long as they retained the leadership of the movement they could possibly deflect it into the direction of reformism. And the situation in India is such that it provides a basis for this hope, although it appears to be a slim one just at this moment. The development of the revolution will in one way or another be strongly influenced by the action of the proletariat, by the *tactics of the Communist Party*.

Meanwhile, neither the attitude of the leaders nor the resolution of Congress is the correct measuring stick for an assessment of the possibilities of the situation. If one made a judgement according to the resolution adopted by Congress, the prospect does not appear very encouraging. The main resolution supported by Gandhi contains 4 points: 1. Complete independence as the ultimate aim of the National Congress; 2. refusal to attend the forthcoming conference with the English government in London; 3. boycott of the existing legislative bodies, and 4. organization of a movement for non-payment of taxes.

On the surface the resolution is very radical, but in reality the matter looks quite differently. The first point, which has aroused so much attention in the whole world, is the mere expression of a desire and will remain such as long as the nationalist movement remains without an action-programme for the realization of the aim. The second point is a purely negative attitude, and even as such it is restricted by the qualification 'under the present circumstances'. This means that if 'circumstances' change, Gandhi and his pseudo-radicals would go to the conference. The third is the only categorically defined determination of the resolution, and it demands an action which in the past has proved to be disastrous. The final point, which seems to be the most threatening, is admittedly not meant for immediate application. The executive committee of Congress has been authorized to act along this line whenever and wherever it appears necessary to do so. In consequence, the acceptance of this resolution does not practically alter the course of the nationalist movement. As a counter-balance against the apparent step forward the door for retreat is left open.

There are other indications of revolutionary possibilities in the situation. Gandhi's deceitful resolution was attacked from both sides, the right as well as the left. A more radical resolution which demanded the *immediate launching of the no-tax campaign, of a general* *strike*, and *setting up of an alternative government*, was defeated by a small minority in the Congress committee. If it had been placed before the plenary session it would have been carried by a large majority. Instead, Gandhi's resolution was accepted by a small majority in the committee and the plenary session passed it as a mere formality. But opposition was so strong that Gandhi had to bring his political stature to bear on it in order to have Congress back him. He threatened to resign if Congress were to pass any other resolution which meant dropping the principle of non-violence. On this vital point he was disappointed and defeated. The huge demonstrations which accompanied the meetings of Congress reverberated with the call: 'Long live Revolution!' That is without precedent in the whole history of the National Congress where the notion of revolution has been an alien one and was prohibited. Last year a workers' demonstration faced Congress with the rallying cry: 'Long live Revolution!' This year the mass of its petit bourgeois followers—25,000 of them gathered together from all corners of this great land—adopted this momentous call. The most active elements in the nationalist movement are beginning to understand that they are caught in a battle whose aim is more far-reaching than national independence, a battle for the radical reorganization of the internal life of the nation whilst the overthrow of the foreign rule is only the beginning.

This deep-reaching radicalization of the petit bourgeoisie has hastened the process of class-differentiation. The Liberal Federation, which represents the upper bourgeoisie, has adopted a resolution which condemns the 'revolutionary policy' of Congress. Its president, an industrialist of Bombay, said in his speech that it was the duty of the government to suppress any attempt undertaken in accordance with the resolution of Congress, and that all persons who had any stake in the country should support the government in maintaining law and order. On the other hand, the right wing of Congress which fought Gandhi's resolution has parted with him. Thus a solid civic bloc has emerged with the express goal of joining British imperialism against the nationalist radicalism of Congress under whose banner the petit bourgeois masses are gathered. Even within Congress there are elements who are endeavouring to break the shackles of the deceitful resolution by Gandhi, and they appear to be strong in numbers too. Their proposed measures—the setting up of an alternative government, the general strike, the immediate no-tax campaign—appear to be under present circumstances somewhat romantic. Any attempt to employ them immediately would cause disintegration of the nationalist movement, because the movement is still far-removed from being prepared organizationally to face the suppressive measures which would surely be the foreign government's reply to any such attempt. The organization of political strikes will be an effective tactic in the present situation. But a proper general strike can only take place as a prelude to an armed uprising which has yet to be prepared politically, organizationally, and technically. It is a petit bourgeois illusion to talk of setting up a government before an armed uprising. Nonetheless, those who approve such drastic measures show their readiness for a revolutionary struggle. The need of the moment is to provide them with a national-democratic revolutionary programme and to lead them gradually into the battle for the realization of this programme.

The Indian Revolution—a dispute with Heinz Neumann*

The vigorous struggle of the Indian people for their liberation from English foreign rule gains strength despite severe difficulties. The basic difficulty is this that the Indian revolution, although it is essentially and historically a bourgeois democratic Revolution, has to develop itself against the growing antagonism of the local bourgeoisie. In order to be successful, the Indian national revolution must, even in its initial phase, achieve the downfall of foreign rule over the leadership of the national bourgeoisie. This was clear from the very beginning, to any Marxist who had some knowledge of the situation.

Today Heinz Neumann, the present theoretician of the recently restructured Communist Party of Germany, wants to show that he knows as much (in reality so little) about India as he does about China.[1] He thinks that this can be done by calling me a 'Renegade' and 'an agent of the British police'. If he was genuinely concerned to learn about something from reliable sources before he talked nonsense about it, then he would have known that as long as 8 years ago this 'Renegade' and 'National Democrat' (as Trotsky calls me in concurrence with Neumann) learnt from Lenin's and Plekhanov's analysis of the perspective of the Russian Revolution, and he came to the conclusion that the Indian revolution will win only as a proletarian revolution. The leadership of the international communist movement had to try out various things by using Neumann's sort of people, in order to get over the baseless illusion about the revolutionary role of the Indian National bourgeoisie. But even then they did not learn the lessons properly. They went over to the other exaggeration. They made a fantasy of the Indian proletariat which was supposed to struggle under the banner of the Soviet Republic, and they recommended a tactic which only ignorant adventurers, who are sitting thousands of miles away from the place of action, could recommend.

How little Neumann and people like him know about the actual situation in India is exemplified by the sheer nonsense which has been published in the latest issue of *Rote Fahne* [Red Flag] as a report from India. We repeat that the revolution in India develops itself, that the distinguishing trend of the present stage of the development is the conflict among classes, that the proletariat promises to be the actual leader of the National Revolution in the near future (at present it is the potential leader), and that a united front of foreign imperialism and of the national bourgeoisie is in formation in order to resist the increasing impact of the revolution. It is necessary for the international proletarian movement to be correctly informed about the situation in India, with the objective of effectively helping the revolutionary forces in that country as far as possible. But it is a crime to depict a distorted picture, and people like Neumann commit this crime when they misuse the proletarian press to spread their adventurous fantasies as news and views on the situation.

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* Translated from *Arbeiter Politik*, Vol. 2, No. 19, 27 Jan. 1930. Signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

In India the working class is a small component of the huge population. On the other side of the society there is the bourgeoisie, which is also a small constituent of the people. Between the two, there exists a huge mass of people, the overwhelming majority of which consists of the peasants. In view of the fact that the bourgeoisie, which is the most advanced element of the country, both politically and culturally, deserts the revolutionary front and goes over to the side of imperialism, the significance of the masses existing between the two classes of the opposite poles becomes greater. The distinguishing trend of the present situation is the radicalization of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia which steps in the shoe of the big bourgeoisie, as leader of the national freedom struggle. The growth of the proletariat as an independent factor is testified by the major strikes of the last years. But this does not rule out the other factors of power. In fact, there is development of this last factor, namely, the proletariat, which, without doubt, is the governing factor, but it is still under the leadership of the former, namely, the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. The Neumanns have read in the bourgeois press about the major strikes in Bombay, Calcutta, Jamshedpur and Madras. On the basis of this superficial knowledge they day-dream about the character and significance of these major movements. They even do not know that, except in the case of Bombay, all these strikes were led by the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, which is politically, mostly, nationalist.

One of the measures of the government to curb the strikes of the last two years, was the arrest of 31 leaders of this movement.[2] In the opinion of the present leadership of the Communist International the burning issue of the political life in India is not the session of the National Congress at Lahore where 25000 people, who embody the most active elements of the nationalist movement, have assembled under the slogan 'Long Live Revolution' and 'Down with Imperialism'; for them the more important issue is the prosecution of these 31 leaders of the struggle of the working class. The historical significance of the prosecution and the movement which the prosecuted leaders represent is very large. But to underestimate the importance of other factors for the correct assessment of the basic situation means to lose all sense of proportion. Further, an objective assessment of these prosecuted leaders leading the struggle of the working class reveals the danger of overestimation of their real strength.

At the end of the first hearing of the prosecution, the accused were asked to reply to the charges framed against them. The charges read that the accused were all Communists, who had taken part in a movement for overthrowing the present Government with the objective of installing a government on the Russian model. With the exception of nine people, all the others said they were no Communists (some even declared that they were against Communism), many declared themselves to be supporters of Gandhi, others stated that they wanted to follow the line of the British Labour Party, and all denied the charge that they were working for the downfall of the Government.[3] These people as leaders of the militant workers' movement, were arrested in different parts of the country; they represent the actual position of the movement which from the evidence is very different from what one reads in the *Rote Fahne*. According to the *Rote Fahne* report, the revolutionary movement in India has in the last 2 years overtaken the lead of the Chinese revolution with a powerful leap. It has entered immediately the phase of the revolutionary struggle under the banner of the Soviet Union (*Rote Fahne*, dt. 8th January).

If the accused in the Meerut case are the representatives of the most revolutionary elements of the movement (which actually is the case), and if the large majority of them deny the intention to organize the working class for a revolutionary struggle, then the above assessment of the Indian situation by the *Rote Fahne* is simply a fantasy by its experts on India.

It is easy to call a revolutionary a renegade. That is cheap demagogy. But it is absurd to claim the existence of a Communist Mass Party in a country where revolutionary class-consciousness has only partially developed even among the most progressive leaders of the working class, and where convinced communists who are ready to struggle for their conviction are very few. And it is foolish to overlook the revolutionary forces which are really effective, since the proletariat has still to prepare itself for playing the leading role. Although it may sound very radical, in reality such fantasy-mongering does not support the development of an actual communist mass Party but obstructs it—it does not lead the Indian revolution but helps British Imperialism. This role is being played today by the Neumanns and people like him in the International.

We read the following editorial of the *Rote Fahne* dt. 3rd January:

> Under pressure of the revolutionary mass movement there took place apparently revolutionary manoeuvres of the bourgeois National Congress. There were vigorous mass demonstrations where thousands of voices repeatedly shouted the slogan: 'Long Live Revolution'!

The true nature of the situation was not known to the writer since he could read only the bourgeois press. He did not know that the demonstrations where these very significant slogans were shouted were demonstrations of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. But this factor is not included in his scheme of the Indian revolution. He did not know that the bourgeois leaders of the Congress were compelled as a result of the revolt of their petty bourgeois supporters, to make a declaration, which gave consent to a conference with the imperialist government. When these Comintern 'leaders' of the Indian revolution from a long distance are at least able to read an Indian language newspaper, they would see what sort of nonsense they are talking about. Even the *Rote Fahne* recognizes that the political mass strikes in India show the 'unorganized' nature of Indian labour. Only its wise editor knows manifestly nothing of the very elementary fact of the Indian working class movement, namely, that hardly 10 per cent of the industrial workers in this land are organized. Until recently there were no trade unions at all in many industries. Often, the strikes took place naturally under the leadership of spontaneously instituted central organizations.

In the recent past a split has taken place in the Trade Union Congress, where the left wing had the majority.[4] The left wing, in which the communists are the most active element, chose an extraordinarily petty bourgeois radical nationalist leader for the post of president of the Trade Union Congress.[5]

Despite the wrong line of the present leadership of the Communist International and despite the foolish interpretation which Neumann gives to Indian developments, the Indian revolution will follow its own course. It must still pass through the following stages one after another—class polarization through which the proletariat gathers strength; development of revolutionary class consciousness and acquisition of political experience; and bringing the masses under its leadership, the great body of people which stands between the proletariat and the nationalist bourgeois. In this manner the proletariat will become ultimately the actual leader of the revolution.

The radicalization of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, its finally getting rid of the illusion of Gandhism (passive resistance), is an important stage of the movement. For developing and expediting this process, the coming into being of a Communist Mass Party would be far more useful than all the fantasies about a working class still occupied with their elementary struggles. The organization of a revolutionary nationalist mass party is the pressing need of the movement. One may call a Roy a 'Renegade' when he draws one's attention to this necessity. But this necessity must be fulfilled, if the Indian revolution has to succeed. And it will be fulfilled. That is the actual situation in India.

Notes

[1] Born of wealthy parents, Heinz Neumann left his upper class home and environment at the age of sixteen and joined the socialist youth movement in Germany. He picked up several languages (French, Italian and Russian, besides his mother tongue German) while tramping all over Europe. During 1922–4 he went to Moscow as an interpreter at the Comintern Congresses and meetings. By temperament a romantic adventurer, he was active in some of the clandestine operations of the German Communist Party, and was involved in the Comintern-planned German uprising of 1923 which proved to be a disaster. At the Fifth Congress of the Comintern he attracted the attention of Stalin who found in him a willing and useful tool in his struggle for power. Stalin sent him to China in 1927 where, together with Besso Lominadze, he organized the disastrous Canton uprising in December which 'lasted exactly three days before Chiang crushed it in an ocean of blood'. On his return to Moscow he was employed by Stalin in undermining Bukharin in the Comintern and his supporters in Germany. He became secretary to Ernst Thaelmann, the Stalinist leader of the German Communist Party, and a member of the Party Politbureau.

However, he found it increasingly difficult to swallow the official Party policy of tolerating the Nazis while fighting the Social Democrats. His reservations led to his elimination from the post of Thaelmann's secretary in 1931 and from the Politbureau in 1932. He was sent to Spain, from there to Zurich, and then in 1935 brought to Moscow where he was investigated for nearly two years by the International Control Commission. He was arrested in April 1937 and, according to Ruth Fischer, was 'killed in Russia'. His wife Grete Buber-Neumann was handed over by the GPU to the Gestapo who put her in the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp. Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, 1948. Also private conversations with her.

[2] On the charge of having 'entered into a conspiracy to deprive the King of the sovereignty of British India, and having thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 121A of IPC' thirty-one persons were arrested in March 1929 from different towns in India, and taken to Meerut to stand trial. Thirteen came from Bombay, ten from Bengal, five from the United Provinces and three from the Punjab.

Indian Annual Register, 1929, I, p. 65; *The Times* (London), 21 March, 13 and 15 June 1929.

[3] For a summary of evidence, *Judgement Delivered by R. L. Yorke, Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut, on 16 January 1933 in the Meerut Conspiracy Case*, Simla, Government of India Press, 1932–3, 2 Vols. For a comprehensive collection of documents, letters, etc. forming prosecution evidence, *Proceedings of the Meerut Conspiracy Case*, Meerut, Saraswati Press, 1929, 11 volumes.

[4] At the Tenth Annual Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress held at Nagpur, 30 November to 1 December 1929 and presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru, the moderate section of trade unionists broke away from the AITUC and formed the Indian Trade Union Federation. 30 unions joined the ITUF which claimed a total membership of 96,000. The AITUC now had 21 unions and claimed a total membership of 93,000. S. D. Punekar, *Trade Unionism in India*, Bombay, 1948.

[5] After the split, the Communist-dominated AITUC elected Subhas Chandra Bose as its new President, while the moderate ITUF elected V. V. Giri as its President. V. B. Karnik, *Indian Trade Unions*, Bombay, 1960.

SNR.

Once Again The 6th World Congress of the Communist International
A Reply to Comrade Herberg*

In the article on the international situation (*Gegen den Strom*, 25 January 1930) it has been shown how far the resolutions of the 6th World Congress are responsible for the crisis in the Communist International. Nevertheless it is improbable that that would already convince the opposition in the Communist Party of America of the falseness of its views on the development of the crisis in the Communist International. In his article Comrade Herberg[1] clings to the view that the 6th Congress has not posed the theory that we are in a period of capitalist decline which extends over the whole world. He disputes the fact that the tactic of 'offensive along the whole line', the platform of the current ultra-left putschism, was recommended by the 6th Congress. Further, he is of the opinion that the theory of Social-fascism did not originate from the 6th Congress.

Here are a few excerpts from the resolutions of the 6th Congress on all these matters:

> The third period. . .unavoidably gives the impetus to a new series of imperialist wars: among the imperialist states themselves, wars of the imperialist states against the Soviet Union, national liberation battles against imperialism and imperialist intervention, and to giant class battles.

It has to be noted particularly that it was not put forward as a prospect of the situation but as the current situation. (It is not said that this crisis *will* give rise to new imperialist wars, but that it does so *now*.) This has proved to be a false prophecy. It has been shown that the international situation has not been judged correctly. The hysterical shouting about the war peril dominates the tactics and activity of the Communist parties for the whole time since the 6th Congress. The stress on the intensity of the war danger was the most noticeable trait of the 6th Congress. Events have proved that the danger which always exists and increases in proportion to the growing contradictions of capitalism is not as acute as depicted in the resolution of the 6th Congress. Congress would not have been mistaken on this matter if it had judged the crisis of capitalism correctly. On this matter the following appears in the resolution of the Congress:

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 3, No. 5, pp. 80–81, 1 February 1930; signed article. SNR.

> . . . therefore the growth of a new series of gigantic military conflicts, of wars of intervention against the USSR and the intervention which is in full sail at the moment in China.

On the grounds of this prophecy (which, by the way, is not a Marxist assessment of the future development), the nature of the current crisis of capitalism was portrayed as follows:

> The intensification of internal contrasts in the capitalist countries . . . will inescapably lead to the capitalist consolidation—through further generation of contradictions of capitalist consolidation—becoming still more uncertain, and to a strong intensification of the general crisis of capitalism.

This sentence contains either the simple repeated statement of the law of capitalist production, or it attempts to assess the prospects of a given situation from this law. Apparently, the latter is the case, and how is the situation assessed? The general crisis (that is a crisis extending over the whole world) is not seen in perspective. It exists, else one could not speak of its intensification. Further, an intensification has not occurred in any degree worth mentioning except in one or two countries. Nonetheless, the prophecy of the 'intensification of the general crisis of capitalism' which the 6th Congress made provides the basis for the tactic of 'attack along the whole front'.

What was said in the resolution about the possibility of a local upheaval does not invalidate its sense which consists in stressing the universality of the crisis and the impending period of a gigantic catastrophe which evolves directly from it. If this were not the essence of the assessment of the world situation by the 6th Congress, then the theory of the Third Period would be nonsense. Indeed, the Third Period as the 6th Congress saw it was clearly the period of the collapse of capitalist consolidation and, correspondingly, the revolutionary crisis spreading over the whole world in which the conquest of political power becomes the *immediate* task of the proletariat *of all countries*. Therefore it was the resolution of the 6th Congress which laid the theoretical foundation for the ultra-left putsch tactic which, of course, was not developed suddenly and immediately. The resolutions of the Xth Plenum of the ECCI were the direct fruit of the theories which the 6th Congress created.

On the matter of tactics we find the following in the resolution of the 6th Congress:

> The generation of each strike must result in it taking on an anti-establishment character.

Further:

> Just as the beginning of the consolidation period and the general capitalist offensive touched off defensive fighting, so the new period is characterized by its large mass-fighting.

The meaning of this claim is quite clear. It is thus: The present period is a period of the offensive fight. Here we have thus the justification in theory of the current tactic of 'Offensive along the whole front'. The outcry over the non-existence of political mass-strikes, which furnishes the Communist Parties today with the pretext for giving up all real activity through which the masses can be mobilized, was to be expected from the wrong formulations of the 6th Congress. And what was the basis for this theory that 'huge mass-battles' are the characteristic trait of the period?

> The wave of strikes in a number of countries: the uprising of the Viennese proletariat; the demonstrations against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti; the movement in favour of the Soviet Union, etc.

The claim presents a self-delusion which has become so glaring since the Congress that at last an official voice was raised against it. (In Manuilski's speech at the Plenum of the Communist Youth International.) Furthermore, the theory of the political nature of every strike in the third period was the point of departure for the new union policy which separates the communist parties from the most organized and most progressive sections of the proletariat. If every little action of the working class, even on matters of direct economic demands, straightaway takes on a political character, unfolds the question of state-power, then the union(s) cease to be a tool of the class-struggle. Under such circumstances the work of the union with the aim of winning its organized workers for communism loses all meaning. The workers who still remain loyal to their unions cease to be the vanguard of the revolution. The chief stress is transferred to the unorganized [workers] who are extolled as the 'stormtroop of the revolution' which is supposed to be free of union prejudices; and the union as such is regarded as an obstacle in the development of the class-struggle if it is not a section of the Communist Party.

Stalin's theory about the unorganized, which has provided the communists with the pretext to give up all activity in the unions, has its roots in the resolution of the 6th Congress. It may be found in two different places. The resolution says there where it is dealing with the role of the 'left' social-democratic leaders:

> Therefore, while we are taking account of the left inclination even among the ranks of the social-democrats, etc. etc.

In the chapter on tactics we find the following:

> Also, the rally-cry 'battle for the masses' (including those who follow the leadership of the bourgeois and social-democratic parties) is not invalidated because of it.

On both occasions the organized workers are moved to second place. To whom is the main attention given? Obviously to the workers who neither belong to the social-democratic ranks nor follow the leadership of social-democratic parties, i.e. the unorganized workers.[2]

On the vital matter of union policy we read the following in the resolution of the 6th Congress:

> The organization of the unorganized, the gaining of the reformist unions, the organization of the excluded, wherever conditions are favourable for it (in countries where the union movement is split), the leading from within of local organizations which we have gained and their union with the revolutionary industrial organizations—those are the tasks of the moment.

These measures were recommended, of course, after praising the necessity to be active within the unions. However, as soon as the theory is accepted that in the present period the union ceases to be an arm of the class-struggle, then all talk about being active within them is useless. Why should communists work within organizations which have become obstacles to the development of the revolutionary battle? To the contrary. The interests of the proletarian revolution then demand their destruction. Can we blame those of 'revision of the Leninist line of the 6th Congress' who have done nothing else but drawn the logical conclusions from these resolutions?

The recommendation of 'organization of the unorganized' necessarily leads to the formation of new parallel unions as this recommendation was not equipped with specific terms on where they were to be organized. If the old unions are regarded as the bulwarks of reaction, then one cannot expect the communists to lead the unorganized masses into them. The remaining advice is, in a similar way, a wondrous point of departure for the present union tactics.

Likewise, the roots of the theory of '*socialist-fascism*' are contained in the resolutions of the 6th Congress. They are the following:

> This development finds its expression in the general crisis of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarianism.

Further:

> Just this condition [the political nature of each strike] forces the bourgeoisie and its state to resort to cunning methods of economic and political corruption of certain sections of the working class itself and to interfere in its industrial organization.

When social-democratic leaders participate in the government under conditions of the general crisis in the bourgeois democracy, then they become, of course, followers of fascism, because there is no middle way between bourgeois parliamentarianism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The second quote stresses the strength of the 'labour aristocracy' which is to be the social foundation of socialist fascism. It even goes further. It predicts the turning to 'fascism' not only of the social-democrats but also of the political and union organizations of the working class.

Further:

> At the same time as it employs social-democracy the bourgeoisie has at critical times and under certain circumstances erected a fascist rule.

Thus socialist fascism originates, because

> the ideology of the cooperation of the classes—the official ideology of social-democracy—has certain points in common with fascism.

The upholding of parliamentary democracy as an abstract principle is the characteristic trait of revisionist social democracy. *Fascism, however, grows out of the collapse of parliamentary democracy*. The theory of 'socialist fascism' is total nonsense because it disregards this principal contradiction. In so far as this disregard crept into the resolution of the 6th Congress it laid the grounds for the theory of socialist fascism.

In view of these results of the 6th Congress it is rather dogmatic to claim, as does Comrade Herberg, that if the line [taken by] the 6th Congress had been executed there would now be no crisis in the CI. The crisis in the CI has been caused no more by the imagined revision of the line of the 6th Congress than by mere establishment of this line. It has been caused by the contradiction that had developed within the Comintern in the course of its evolution. It is occasioned through the monopoly of its leadership by one single party after the original objective grounds for this monopoly have long been removed. The basically false resolutions of the 6th Congress were the first prominent expression of the crisis. The resolutions of the 6th Congress should be looked at independently of the factional fighting in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Whether this be led by Stalin or Bukharin or anyone else, the CPSU can no longer monopolize the leadership of the Communist International. The 6th Congress made this obvious. Therefore its [the Congress's] significance as indicator of the crisis in the Communist International.

Notes

[1] Will Herberg was the other leading figure in the American Communist Opposition, besides Jay Lovestone and Bertram Wolfe. He worked in the Lovestoneite organization throughout its eleven years of existence, and backed Lovestone in each of the three major controversies within the group. Benjamin Gitlow left the group in 1932 because he totally disagreed with Lovestone's support to Soviet Planning and Collectivization. Herbert Zam left it in 1934 because Lovestone rejected his plea for the foundation of a new Communist Party and a new Communist International. In 1940 Bertram Wolfe strongly disagreed with Lovestone's view that the US should support the Allies against Nazi Germany in the war. Wolfe considered the war to be 'the result of the rapid decay of capitalism' and therefore opposed it. On each occasion Herberg took Lovestone's side in the controversy.

In the Lovestone Opposition Herberg was a frequent contributor to the *Revolutionary Age* (from January 1932 *Workers' Age*); he taught at the Marx–Lenin School run by the group, and was also educational director of Local 22 of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. After the dissolution of the group, Herberg after a while emerged as a distinguished Jewish theologian. He became a Professor in Drew University, in Madison, New Jersey. R. J. Alexander, *The Right Opposition*, 1981.

[2] 'The Theses on the Economic Struggle and the Tasks of the Communist Parties' adopted by the Tenth Plenum of ECCI clearly spelled out that 'the most characteristic feature in the appraisal of the contemporary economic battles . . . is the ever-growing activity of the unorganized workers . . . Hence the decisive importance of independent leadership of strikes on the part of the Communist revolutionary trade union vanguard without and against the reformist trade union apparatus.' *Inprekorr* IX, 46, 4 Sept. 1929; also *Xe Session du Commite Executif de l'Internationale Communiste*, Paris, 1929. SNR.

The Follies of a Repentant Renegade*

As I am not a self-made Bolshevik who conceals the paucity of his ideas behind insulting language, I am not accustomed to state my differing political opinions in unnecessarily offensive expressions. Nevertheless, it is impossible to describe Safarov's article in the current issue of the *Communist International* more aptly than as the follies of a repentant renegade.[1] It was to be expected that the great guns of the official arsenal would be directed against me sooner or later. But one should have found someone for this work who was less discredited than Safarov. With his record of crossing from one extreme to another, executed at a dizzy speed, Safarov ought to be the last man to appear as an advocate of ideological solidity and political consistency. He calls me a 'bourgeois liberal' because I have reserved for myself the freedom of thought and speech based on the fundamental principles of communism and within the boundaries of party-democracy which are not incompatible with Bolshevism. His own past does not render him suitable for the part of mentor or guardian of virtue. After the revolution Safarov was one of the 'left communists' who opposed the Brest [-Litovsk] Treaty, who declared themselves against the people's right to self-determination and who rejected the New Economic Policy. In 1923 he was the most energetic fighter against Trotskyism. He led the Leningrad organization and demanded Trotsky's expulsion from the Party. The following year he appeared on the scene as the theoretician of the Zinoviev Opposition who accused Stalin of being a Thermidorian. Then, together with his chief Zinoviev he stood squarely on the platform of Trotskyism. Finally, he went further than his chief by becoming the leader of the extreme left opposition which claimed that Stalin's policy of a dictatorship of the proletariat had changed into a bourgeois democracy in which the Kulaks were predominant and that, therefore, the interests of the working class demanded a second revolution in Russia. Safarov visited Europe to get in touch with ultra-left groups who were openly hostile to the Soviet Union.[2] As he failed in this pernicious adventure, he returned home, was expelled from the Party and exiled to Siberia.

Another little story might be mentioned in this context which shows that Safarov's hysterical outburst against me is to be attributed to personal bitterness rather than to political passion. After its defeat at the 14th Congress of the CPSU the Zinoviev–Kamenev Opposition, whose theoretical leader was Safarov, planned to mobilize the Communist International against the Russian Party. Thanks to the stupidity of one of its illegal emissaries the plan came to my notice. As a member of the presidium and the secretariat of the ECCI it was my duty to prevent the harmful factional activity of the Zinoviev–Kamenev–Safarov set by disclosing their plan (to the ECCI). Naturally, they have never forgiven me for that. Now Safarov takes his revenge. But unfortunately for him he is skating merrily on thin ice. His recent past is too discrediting for him to appear as the snow-white, steadfast standard-bearer of orthodox Bolshevism.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 3, No. 6, pp. 97–8, 8 Feb. 1930, signed article. SNR.

Safarov's readmission to the Party can only have been brought about either by his turning coat a fourth time, or by the fact that the Party has adopted the platform of the Opposition to which he belonged. Both are equally discrediting for this hysterical school-master of Bolshevism. In the first case, which the Party announces as what has occurred, Safarov ought to be a little modest and not be such an eager preacher of ideological purity and political steadfastness. In reality the latter has been the case. The Stalinist Central Committee of the CPSU has destroyed the Zinoviev–Trotsky Opposition but to a large measure adopted its platform. Safarov is not an indecent political opportunist. He makes every somersault with conviction. He is a will-o'-the-wispish fanatic. Now he seems to have returned to his former delectation of fighting against Trotskyism. But the true situation is that he is doing so whilst standing on the platform of Trotskyism. From such a ridiculous position he can only put up odious insults instead of a polemical treatise on serious political and tactical matters.

In a long article which has been written for the purpose of fighting my criticism of the current leadership of the Comintern, Safarov has failed to even touch any of the questions raised by me concerning the colonial matter as well as other matters. In order to prove his hypothesis that 'the notion of the proletarian hegemony has remained a sealed book for Roy', Safarov triumphantly produces a historical fact which is the central and shining piece of his article. And what is this fact? It is that I already established the viewpoint at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International that in advanced colonial countries such as India the national liberation struggle could only be successful under the guidance of the working class. At that time Safarov fought against my view whilst he himself recommended a policy which was rightly condemned by Lenin as Christian missionary activity. Even today Safarov ridicules as the dream of a 'petit bourgeois left communist' my opinion which had been admitted as a correct one by Lenin who recommended that my thesis be accepted by the 2nd Congress as a complementary one to his own.

Another weaker attempt by Safarov to speak on the matter is his claim that the viewpoint I took at the 2nd Congress (and which I still take) meant the categorical negation of the 'independent revolutionary role of the peasantry in the colonial revolution' and that I reduce everything to the proletariat. Firstly, this interpretation of my view is merely a fantasy of Safarov. Secondly, as the 'independent revolutionary role of the peasantry' is quite foreign to Marxism, I have, of course, never defended it. As far as the accusation is concerned that everything is reduced to the proletariat, I admit being guilty of it. I have always claimed, and I still claim, that the proletariat is the driving force of the Indian revolution. Sages such as Safarov needed 5 years since the 2nd Congress (during the whole of that period I have been criticized as a 'leftist' because I stressed the importance of the proletariat) to understand this fundamental trait of the situation from which is derived the notion of the proletarian hegemony. The 'rise of a revolutionary working class in India' does not cause me any surprise, as Safarov dogmatically states, because I foresaw it whilst the Safarovs believed that the anti-imperialist battle would evolve on the basis of racial differences. They could not detect the vanguard in the struggle for national liberation in India in the yet numerically small, organizationally weak, politically untrained and culturally backward industrial workers. They looked eagerly to the anti-British fanaticism of the primitive border tribes. For them the reactionary Pan-Islam was a revolutionary movement. They placed more importance on Gandhi's semi-religious sham-radicalism than on the spontaneous strikes and demonstrations of the proletariat. This remarkable lack of faith in the development of the proletariat into a driving force of the Indian national revolution by half-baked Bolsheviks like Safarov is recorded in the proceedings of the Communist International up to the 5th Congress when the 'dream of a petit bourgeois left communist' became the official view. Eventually the Communist International admitted that something like a working class existed to which a special place had to be allotted in the overall scheme of the Indian revolution. And if one knows that Safarov was the leader of the Eastern Division of the ECCI for a long time during the preceding period, then his manner of instructing me about the hegemony of the proletariat appears to be a laughable impertinence.

Further: to direct the attention on the one hand to the bourgeoisie and on the other to the proletariat, but to ignore in between the two social strata which comprise the overwhelming majority of the population in colonial countries is a characteristic feature of Trotskyism. And the present line of the Communist International in India runs exactly in that direction. Therefore, I am opposed to it.

According to the present leadership of the Communist International the peasantry, the urban lower middle classes and the other oppressed sections of society, who together form more than 80 per cent of the Indian population, are not to be taken into the revolutionary account. The bourgeoisie has allied itself with imperialism. Therefore the proletariat becomes the sole revolutionary force, and the whole national revolution has grown beyond the stage of the bourgeois–national revolution and enters the phase of the proletarian–socialist revolution which is taking place under the banner of the soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat. That again is Trotskyism which denies the bourgeois–democratic character (in the historical and objective sense) of the colonial revolution. Therefore, it is not myself but the current leadership of the Communist International which adopts a negative attitude in relation to the peasantry, and my opposition to this attitude is condemned by Safarov as an 'ideological metamorphosis of a renegade'. He claims that I had transformed myself from a 'petit bourgeois left communist' into a 'bourgeois liberal'. It is interesting to note that Trotsky too calls me a 'national democrat'. The ideological and political kinship between Trotsky and Safarov is thus obvious.

I am a 'bourgeois liberal' or 'national democrat' because I maintain that hegemony is not [the same as] leadership, that the proletariat is the driving force of the Indian national revolution and as such, its function at this moment is to gather around it all available forces of this revolution. This the proletariat cannot do if it fights under the catch-phrases of the proletarian revolution. To be an effective and successful moving force of the national revolution the working class must have, besides its maximum programme, a minimum programme, and issue appropriate slogans which can attract the other oppressed social elements. Organizationally, the follow-up of this political strategy is a national revolutionary mass party under the hegemony of the proletariat. At the present phase of the Indian revolution the existence of such a party beside the Communist Party and under its guidance is indispensable. Safarov and those like him, who demand ideological slavery under the pretext of ideological solidarity, cannot understand that my standpoint does not imply the negation of the proletarian hegemony but its practical execution.

I shall deal with the theory of the so-called 'decolonization' on another occasion and show that my analysis of the situation, contrary to Safarov's claim (he does not prove it), does not mean the abandonment of the revolutionary conflict with English Imperialism but leads to an intensified general struggle under the hegemony of the proletariat.

Two words on *China*. When, during the critical days of the spring of 1927 the leadership of the CP of China under Borodin's influence did not understand how it could exercise the hegemony of the proletariat in practice, I proposed as representative of the ECCI that the Communist Party should produce a minimal programme of national revolution with the aim of forcing a class-differentiation within the ranks of the Kuomintang. Safarov does not treat this programme as far as its substance is concerned but [mentions it] in order to accuse me of 'ambitiousness'. He calls me the 'caricature of a Moses who brings [down] the commandment tablets'. That really goes too far. This is no longer a polemic debate between political opponents but petty squabbling. Only those who are politically and ideologically quite bankrupt happen to stoop to such a low polemical level. Then Safarov, in a truly official fashion, reproduces a mutilated version of one of my short speeches delivered at the 5th Congress of the CP of China in order to hurl a few further invectives at my head. I did not say, as he falsely claims, that in the process of realizing bourgeois democracy private property will be destroyed which was not even under consideration at that moment. I did assert that private property could not be completely eliminated until the revolution had developed beyond the phase of the bourgeois–democratic revolution, and the dictatorship of the proletariat had been established. It is characteristic that Safarov overlooks disdainfully my book *The Chinese Revolution and the Communist International* whose publication in another than the Russian language was prevented by the ECCI apparatus because it contains a few indigestible lessons for which people like Safarov are responsible.[3]

Of course, Safarov does not deal with the factual content of my articles on the crisis in the Communist International. He merely uses the language of the fish-market as a reply. He would be fairly surprised if he were to read *Manuilski's* speech which was published in the same issue of the *Communist International* and which has to admit that the situation in the Communist International is as bad as we renegades have shown by way of a warning.

Finally, as regards Safarov's views (or are they wishes?) about my demise, I came to communism from revolutionary nationalism. As a representative of the emerging Indian proletariat I found my way to Moscow and I am not reversing my steps on the command of a Safarov. I remain where my revolutionary conviction led me—in the Communist International. Moscow is not a geographical but a political notion. Neither is it the monopoly or the inheritance of the Safarovs. History will judge Safarov's prediction that I 'have no place either in Moscow or in India'.

Notes

[1] Safarov's article 'The End of Mr Roy' appeared in *The Communist International*, Series 2, Vol. 6, No. 28, pp. 1107–1116. (Greenwood Reprint edition, 1968—see note in *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Vol. II, p. 259). Georgii Ivanovich Safarov (1891–1938) joined the Bolshevik Party at the early age of 17, was arrested and exiled, then emigrated and later returned to Russia with Lenin in 1917. He became a member of the Turkestan Commission and of the Central Asiatic Bureau of the Comintern together with M.N. Roy and G. Sokolnikov. Zinoviev, Safarov and Roy conducted the Congress of the Toilers of the Far East at Moscow in January 1922, where Safarov strongly supported Roy's view that in colonial and semi-colonial countries the indigenous bourgeoisie had no revolutionary potential and should not be supported by the Communists. *The First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East*, Petrograd, 1922. According to Whiting, Safarov's views were closer to Roy's on the colonial question than to Sneevliet's (Maring's). A. S. Whiting, *Soviets Policies in China*, 1953.

Safarov changed sides several times, but personal relations between him and Roy were warm and friendly from the time of the Second Congress till Roy's break with the Comintern in 1929. Safarov was in charge of the Eastern Department of the Comintern in 1921–2, editor of *Petrogradskaia* (later *Leningradskaia*) *Pravda*, 1922–6, Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in China in 1926, and with the Soviet embassy in Turkey in 1927. He backed Zinoviev, was exiled, and then recanted in a letter dated 31 March 1928 to the Party Central Control Commission. He was reinstated in the Party, but finally purged and executed in 1938. A prodigious writer he was the author of many books and articles, among them *Problems of the East*, Petrograd, 1922; *The Bases of Leninism*, Leningrad, second ed. 1924 (both in Russian); and *Marx and the East*, New York, 1934.

X. J. Eudin and R. C. North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, Stanford, 1957; M. N. Roy, *Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964.

[2] Safarov was appointed to the Soviet Embassy in Constantinople in 1927 to keep him away from Zinoviev and Trotsky. Zinoviev protested against this in a letter dated 27 August 1927 (Trotsky Archives, Houghton Library, Harvard, T999). According to Trotsky, Safarov came to Berlin from Constantinople in November 1927, where he loudly proclaimed 'the advent of Thermidor in the Soviet Union'. A more detailed account is given by Ruth Fischer. An international Conference was held at Berlin early in December 1927 to bring the anti-Stalin Opposition groups together into some kind of an organization. Safarov came from Constantinople to chair the conference. While he was giving his report to the Conference, 'he was handed a telegram from Moscow. Safarov became pale; controlling himself with visible effort he continued with his report but changed its content completely'. The telegram had advised him of the collapse of the Opposition in the Soviet Union. Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, pp. 602–5.

[3] This refers to *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, Sbornik statei i materialov, Moscow–Leningrad, 1929. Roy prepared the volume late in 1927 after his return from China. He sent the manuscript back from Berlin, 'on request from Moscow' (Preface to M. N. Roy, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China*, Calcutta, 1946, p.vi). The book was virtually suppressed by the Comintern by not allowing it to be published in any other European language. After his break with the Comintern Roy wrote his magnum opus on China which was first published in a German translation in 1930. Sections from *Kitaiskaia* have been included (in Helen Power's English translation) in *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Vol. II.

SNR.

The International Consolidation of the Communist Opposition*

The Answer to the Manoeuvres of the Comintern Bureaucracy

On March 17 to 19 there took place in Berlin an important *international conference* of the Communist Opposition. In it there participated a delegation of the Swedish Party, the National Council of the German Communist Opposition, Comrade Neurath for the Czechoslovakian Opposition and M. N. Roy. Since the conference could only have informative and preliminary significance, the Austrian, Alsatian, Finnish, etc., Oppositions limited themselves to sending greetings and to declaring their basic agreement with the quickest possible establishment of international relations of the Communist Opposition. Basing itself upon the rich material of the reports, some of them written, the Conference discussed all of the questions that will come before an international conference of the Communist Opposition to be called in the near future.

The Berlin Conference assumes historic significance through the fact that it took place precisely at the time that the bankrupt leadership of the Communist International performed one of its periodic 'new turns'. There were no illusions as to this 'new turn'. It was estimated for what it is—a *factional manoeuvre* to meet the growing opposition against the dangerous ultra-left sectarianism. This new turn signifies *the growing strength of the opposition and is a sign of its coming victory*. Therefore there reigned at our conference an atmosphere of confidence in the historical significance of the international opposition and the firm conviction that our struggle will free the Communist International out of its present crisis, will unite it and will strengthen it on the basis of the fundamental principles of Marxism and Leninism.

Aside from *the reports on the situation of the Communist Opposition* in the most important countries the Conference took up the following points: *Our Platform and our attitude towards the Communist International*. On these points Comrade Thalheimer reported. There was a report on *our attitude to other types of oppositional groups* (Trotskyites, Wynkoop group in Holland, etc.) and finally *organizational questions*.

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* From *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition* (INKOPP), Double number 2/3, March–April 1930, pp. 1–4, signed article. The same article in an English version appeared in the American edition of INKOPP, *Revolutionary Age*, published from New York, No. 2, May 1930. American spellings have been anglicized. SNR.

In view of the tactical manoeuvre of the official leadership of the Comintern the second point of the order of business naturally became the chief point. What is the obvious purpose of the 'fight on two fronts'? Its purpose is to remove some of the worst excesses of the ultra-left tactics in recent years and to re-awaken among the membership new hopes of 'bolshevist elasticity and determination'. With the exception of the relatively narrow sections closely bound up with the Comintern and Party apparatus, the members of the International have become alarmed at the condition of the Communist movement. The dissatisfaction with the present tactics and the resistance against them have become so general that they can no longer be met with expulsions and other forms of the terrorist inner-Party regime. Not only entire Party organizations (factory nuclei above all) as in Germany but the great majority of the Party itself, as in Sweden, for example, have put themselves in opposition to the ultra-left adventure. In America the Majority of the Party was on the side of the Opposition when it first appeared. A change took place as a result of the unscrupulous factional activity and the terrorism that set in under the authority of the Executive against the opponents of the new course.[1] The consequence then was that the Party as a political force has been almost destroyed. The majority of the membership have not gone over to the official camp; they have left the Party altogether. Something had to be done in order to quiet the membership who were fast losing their confidence in the official leaders. Otherwise it would be impossible in spite of all bureaucratic schemes to prevent the passage of the membership slowly to the Opposition. Basing itself upon the best forces of the Party and drawing in fresh blood from the proletarian masses, basing itself upon its correct tactics, the Opposition would have finally become the real Communist Party. This was an alarming perspective for the official leaders of the Communist International. Then there was another point. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was forced under the pressure of facts to make a sudden turn against the bureaucratic excesses of the basically correct course of collectivization. This gave the ECCI bureaucrats the directive, as usual, to carry over this turn to all sections of the Comintern in a purely mechanical manner. In order to save themselves from this whole situation, the leaders of the Communist International suddenly discovered the virtue of 'self-criticism', taking good care, of course, that criticism should not reach their valuable selves. In brief, it was necessary to find a back door through which they could carry out their own sins. The chief aim naturally was to take the wind out of the sails of the Opposition. Through the unscrupulous method of finding in others deviations for which they were themselves responsible, they attempted to appear as the champions of bolshevism. It is a fact that the mock war against 'left radicalism' is only an attempt to re-win the ground that has been lost in the struggle against the 'Right opposition'.

In spite of the fact that the new policy is forced both by the Russian difficulties as well as through the growth of the Opposition in other countries, the leaders of the CI have opened a new attack upon those who have resisted with determination the abandonment of the tactical fundamentals of Lenin. For this reason the Opposition must again clarify its position and must expose the lies and slanders spread against it by the bankrupt official leadership. The Opposition has not the slightest doubt that it will succeed in its task.

We stand on the principles of the Communist International as they were worked out and applied since its foundation under the personal leadership of Lenin.

We stand unshakeably upon the basic principles of Communism as worked out by Marx and Engels and as further developed by Lenin. We most categorically reject the Social-democratic vulgarization and falsification of Marxism.

We are of the opinion that there is no other way to Socialism than through the overthrow of capitalist domination through the armed uprising of the proletariat and through the establishment of a Soviet Republic as an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Communist Opposition, which represents these basic principles with the greatest determination, therefore does not propose the formation of new Parties in the various countries and the formation of a new Communist International.

The Opposition arose in a determined and consciously organized struggle against the perversion of that tactical line which alone can lead to the victory of the proletarian revolution. Naturally, in every movement the tactical measures are determined by its fundamentals and aims—fundamentals and tactics cannot be separated from each other. One determines the other. Therefore a deviation from the tactical line can lead to the adandonment of the aims of the movement. In this case—if the official Communist Parties and the CI carry through their sectarian tactics up to an abandonment of the proletarian struggle for Socialism,—*then the Opposition will have to take over the functions of the Communist Party*.

Counting upon this possibility, the Opposition is today in general working as an organized group for the reform of the *existing*

Communist Parties and the Communist International, although there are exceptions, as for example, already in Sweden.

As long as the official Party stands on the basis of Communist principles, the Opposition cannot be expelled through any edict of the bureaucratic apparatus. The Party is more than a bureaucratic machine. It is the vanguard of the working class; hence the Opposition, which embraces the best forces in the Communist movement, cannot be separated from the revolutionary Party of the proletariat. It fights against the splitting policy of the present leadership, a policy which has so seriously weakened the Communist movement. We denounce the new turn as a dangerous factional manoeuvre because it signifies the maintenance of the isolation policy in a disguised form.

Since the new turn represents a dangerous factional manoeuvre—it is aimed not against ultra-left extravagancies as is declared but actually against the real defenders of the Leninist tactics—then the International Opposition must take counter-measures.

The Conference proposed such measures. Before it lay theses for an *international platform of the Opposition*. This document was referred to an international discussion before a final decision is made. The theses were adopted as material for such a discussion to be put at the disposal of the Opposition groups of the various countries. Before the Platform will be accepted at an international conference it is necessary to have a thorough discussion of all questions. The *International Information of the Communist Opposition* must serve for this purpose.

But even before that time the attack of the official leadership must be met and the real character of the new turn exposed. Therefore the Berlin Conference decided to send an open letter to the Executive of the CI which makes plain the position of the Opposition, which exposes the chief sources of the crisis in the Communist International and the responsibility for it, and which at the same time explains the conditions for the reunification of the Communist International. Since the Berlin Conference did not have the authority it could not adopt such a collective address in the name of all groups of the various countries. Therefore it was decided that the letter, which was considered and discussed by the conference, should be published in the name of the German Opposition and that the Opposition groups of the other countries should solidarize themselves with it with the necessary declarations.

Inner-Party developments since the Conference has proved anew that the official leadership believes that it can counter its bankruptcy by a retreat before the attacks of the Opposition. Its tactics have led to such a catastrophe that the retreat has become a rout. The loudest defenders of the former theories and the most vigorous defenders of the putschist tactics have been removed: Fried and Reiman in Czechoslovakia, Harry Young in England, and Paul Merker himself in Germany, have been quickly deprived of their former power and glory. As is well known, at the Plenum Manuilsky discovered a theory for the sectarian tactics. He declared there that the winning of the majority of the working class is no condition for the capture of power by the Communist Party. He revived the anarcho-syndicalist conception formerly represented by Bordiga according to which a determined minority can carry the masses with it at the decisive moment. Now the same Manuilsky reappears as the champion of the importance of the partial demands! He declares further that in the present period of general economic crisis (the famous 'third period' as an acute revolutionary situation has disappeared) the Communist Party must fight by means of partial demands. The tragi-comedy is even greater. In its recent resolution the Political bureau of the Communist Party of Germany declared—in condemning Merker as the leader of the left-radical fraction—that the 'left-opportunist' platform, which Merker stands for, is a revision of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the State! But Merker's platform is nothing new. *It was the official platform of the Party and of the whole International in the last two years.* And the Opposition fought against this revisionist platform even at the price of its expulsion from the Party and its being branded as 'renegades'. After the resolution condemns Merker and the policy followed by him and the whole Party in the last two years, it declares: 'Right opportunism remains the chief danger'. Precisely this shameless attitude towards the Opposition shows the real character of the new turn. The new turn is only a swindle to prop up the positions of the bankrupt leadership with the help of the mighty apparatus. There can be no real change until the present system of leadership is abolished, a system that develops unscrupulousness and lack of principle. Those people who supported the worst ultra-left course up to yesterday, have changed their coats just as quickly as the danger arose of losing their positions. Only those who followed the ultra-left course through conviction are the victims. To be freed from such a corrupting system is therefore the first task of a healthy Communist movement. A decisive turn out of the present crisis of the CI cannot be made from above but must come from below. To lead the revolutionary masses in the struggle for restoration of the Communist International to health and unity, to develop their criticism and initiative—this is the historical task of the Opposition.

Were the present turn intended honestly and seriously, then we, who have always fought with determination against ultra-leftism, would have been restored to the Party and to our former functions. The official apparatus, however, wants to conduct the struggle against us as the main danger. Thus the much-heralded offensive against left-radicalism is only a mock war. *It is the last attempt of the leadership to maintain their tottering positions*. This was made very clear by the Berlin Conference. But, nevertheless, through its appeal the Conference gave the present leadership the opportunity of showing the seriousness of their turn. When this opportunity will be rejected—as it certainly will—it will show the best elements in the Communist movement how things really are and will thus strengthen the ranks of the Opposition. We have won the first victory. But our task is not easy. We still have a very difficult road before us. We must consolidate our forces internationally, and, standing unswervingly upon the Marxist-Leninist fundamentals of the proletarian revolution, carefully work out our tactical line and apply it with determination. Then our victory is sure!

Note

[1] See detailed note on the CP of the USA on pp. 362–3. SNR.

Gandhi's March*

At its annual meeting at the end of December the Indian National Congress resolved to organize a movement, that of passive disobedience against the laws of the English Government as a step in the fight for freedom. Congress empowered its Working Committee to determine when, where and how the civil disobedience was to be launched. The Working Committee invested Gandhi with dictatorial powers. He alone was authorized to execute the planned action. He was to design a plan and to lead the movement personally. In the exercise of his given authority Gandhi at last began the March in company of 40 young students of his school. He intended to march 150 miles on foot to the coast in order to produce there salt from sea water contrary to the government law which prohibits the private production of salt.

The production and sale of salt is a state monopoly in India. The price of salt which is relatively high is therefore to a large extent an indirect form of taxation. This taxation is greatly resented by the poorer people because along thousands of miles of the sea-coast and along the large rivers people could produce any quantity of salt practically without cost if it were allowed. As the salt-tax provides the exchequer with a considerable revenue, there is a special police force for the discovery and punishment of those who produce salt illegally. An action in this area, if meant seriously and organized correctly, could therefore develop into a powerful mass-movement, but Gandhi and the bourgeois politicians at the top of the National Congress do not desire to develop a mass-movement. On the contrary, they fear their followers who are striving for a revolutionary fight. They would rather find a means to deflect the movement into a harmless avenue. Gandhi's march is a ridiculous farce because it has been drawn up exactly in such a way as to sabotage the endeavour of the nationalist masses for a revolutionary struggle.

Before Gandhi commenced the spectacle he announced the reason for it. In a pompous letter to the English Viceroy he demanded a number of reforms (all in the interests of the bourgeoisie) and declared that if these reforms were granted then the movement of civil disobedience would be revoked. He challenged the English Viceroy to assist him in his endeavour to keep the forces of violence in check. The Viceroy took hardly any notice of this letter. Thus Gandhi was forced to make some sort of gesture; otherwise he would have lost the confidence of the petit-bourgeois masses. While informing the British Government, as he had promised beforehand, that he was about to begin his action of civil disobedience, he wrote that he had to act, else it might be too late to control the forces of violence which were raising their heads everywhere. Thus the purpose of his march was clear from the beginning. He himself made no secret of it. The government, which feared that Gandhi's march might lead to a mass-demonstration, sent troops to the particular spot initially. But that was not necessary so long as the chief design of the leader of the movement consisted in preventing any revolutionary outbreak. On the first day more than 20,000 people gathered around the small army of the Mahatma. But the commander did not want them, and he let them go home—in order to pray that he could reach his destination in an atmosphere of total non-violence. In the villages he traversed the farmers waited eagerly in the hope that the Mahatma would instruct them to stop payment of rents and taxes. But the Mahatma did nothing of the sort. He delivered speeches on the virtue of non-violence. As a result, the masses soon lost interest in the spectacle and waited indifferently for the tired, little group of fanatics which was opposed to revolution and which had inadvertently entered a dead-end street.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Year 3, No. 14, p. 215, 5 April 1930. Unsigned article. SNR.

The government too had recovered from its first nervousness and had wisely resolved to ignore the matter, at the same time, of course, holding itself ready to intervene. Gandhi was given complete freedom to march to his goal, a small place at the coast where he intended to make salt. The only measure the government took was the declaration that the salt produced by the Mahatma and his followers was to be seized by authorized officials and every member of the police-force had the authority to do so. If then Gandhi is to do what is intended, even this little act would bring him into conflict with the whole state power. It is difficult to predict which turn events will take. In order to prevent his march from leading to a clash between the state power and the populace, Gandhi now marched, as he called it, on 'a last religious pilgrimage' with his chosen apostles who undoubtedly will obey his instructions. All his prudence, however, may perhaps be useless and the smouldering dissatisfaction of the people may perhaps flare into a mass-insurrection. In this case the government will cease to be indulgent and suppress the movement, if necessary, by bloodshed. Such a turn will burst the last bubble of illusion about conducting any serious fight for freedom without the certainty of a violent clash. In short, Gandhi's 'last march' will be a further factor in freeing the nationalist movement form Gandhi's influence and from the illusion of Gandhism.

The Indian Revolution and the Second International*

The movement in India has gathered strength, as was expected. Gandhi began his theatrical Salt march with the intention of drawing the militant masses who wish to fight into a harmless course. At the beginning of his march he declared explicitly that he was taking this step with the intention of curbing the forces of violence. But the logic of revolutionary development upset all his clever calculations. The attack on the interest of the salt monopoly had its own effect. It served as a signal for a general uprising against imperialist oppression. The first small action, which violated a minor rule of the imperialist government, resulted in a confrontation between the national movement and the whole of state authority, directly. It became clear that one cannot disregard an individual act only, since each such challenge when it is seriously meant involves certainly a challenge to the existing force in its totality, and this cannot be implemented through non-violent means. The existing power (as soon as its position is threatened in the least) does not hesitate to make use of all means of repression at its disposal. In this situation the political forces, which fight for freedom, have either to give a counter blow or to submit themselves. The significance of the events in India during the last weeks lies in this, that it has made this clear to the petty bourgeois nationalist masses, who used to follow Gandhi and were still having faith in his culture of non-violence.

In support of the action of Gandhi violating the Salt Act large mass demonstrations have taken place all over the country. As the movement could not be contained any more by means of arresting the leadership, the British Government took recourse to violent methods, in order to suppress it. Mass meetings were dispersed by the armed police, demonstrators were shot at by the military, in course of which the defenceless people were killed and wounded. It is only natural that under such provocations the people undertake acts of retaliation. Police stations were attacked and burnt down. At some places attempts were made to capture the ordnance depot of the Government. Some government officials (both English and Indian) were killed in course of street fights. These incidents were used by the Government as an excuse in order to impose further oppressive measures. The country has practically been put under martial law. Tanks and armoured cars are patrolling the streets of the big cities and are terrorizing the completely unarmed people. In many places, the civil government has been replaced by the military. Nationalist newspapers are being suppressed, and printing presses are being confiscated at the slightest pretext. It is 'illegal' if a few people only assemble together in public. Each such assembly is dispersed brutally by the armed police, as a result of which some participants are killed or wounded. For defence, larger demonstrations are being organized. This brutal suppression of the freedom struggle of a whole nation takes place not only with the consent, but actually at the order of the 'Labour Government' in England. The Labour Government has reiterated its accord with the principle of imperialistic suppression. It holds that law and order must be maintained at any cost, before the demands of the Indian people are taken into consideration. The Labour Government, which claims to represent the working class, supports unconditionally all these autocratic actions of the noble Lord Irwin, who governs despotically as the authorized agent of the English King in India and in the interest of the Indian bourgeoisie. The principal organ of the British Labour Party, the *Daily Herald*, finds it, as a matter of fact, rather difficult to justify the arrest of the peaceful Gandhi and the bloody oppression. But it writes, however:

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* Translated from *Arbeiter Politik*, 2nd Year No. 111, Wednesday, 14 May 1930. Signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

> That the Government of India, that any Government for that matter, must enforce respect for the rule, is true enough.

The English Labour Party is a leading section of the Second International. The responsibility for the crime against the Indian people, which is committed by the Macdonald Government, rests therefore completely with the International Social Democracy. The 'Left' Social Democrats are now subjected to an acid test. The hypocrisy of their opposition is exposed. They try to defend the bloody acts of the 'Pacifist Macdonald'. The London-based correspondent of the Berlin newspaper *Vorwaerts* claims shamelessly that the Labour Government is compelled, despite its antipathy to force, to use force against force. He writes:

> In the name of a Government, which is led by the Labour Party, blood is being shed in India. But this Government is not to be blamed for this.

Therefore, the Indian people are at fault. They should not ask for freedom, since a demand compels the Labour Government, 'with all its respect for the old Indian culture', to shed the blood of the Indian people and to arrest their leaders. All this is done by the Government in its anxiety 'to give freedom to India within the British Empire'. This is an example of the most contemptible dishonesty and cheating.

One may think that only the *Vorwaerts* takes such an attitude. But this masterpiece of the London-based correspondent has also embellished the newspaper *Wiener Arbeiterzeitung* as an editorial. We know, therefore, where the 'Left' Social Democratic leaders stand and we draw the attention of their supporters to their social democratic policy. For a characterization of the supporters of the coarse imperialist policy of the Macdonald Government, we refer to the report of the correspondent of the London *Times* in India. He reports from Simla, 'the summer residence of the Indian Government', under the date 7 May:

> An attractive display of the armed forces in the streets, the view of the armoured cars, troops in heavy vehicles and police patrols hardly encourage the apostle of non-violence to prove the correctness of his faith.

From this observation, which has been made by an agent of imperialism, it becomes clear from which side force was used first.

The unconditional support of the leadership of international Social Democracy will nevertheless not enable imperialism to crush the freedom struggle of the Indian people. Under the reign of terror, the Indian people will develop higher forms of revolutionary struggle and will form organizations with the help of which this struggle will ultimately lead to victory.

The Freedom-Struggle in India and the Comintern*

It is remarkable how the Communist International has utterly failed to do anything in connection with the current events in India. The *Red Flag* is covering its pages with news on the 'great Indian revolution' and calls on the Indian people to organize a 'general armed rebellion'. But neither the Communist Party of Germany nor the official communist party in any other country, not even of England, has done anything positive to support the fight of the Indian people. Hardly an official meeting, no demonstration, no effective action of any kind. One or two protest meetings which had been called by the Communist Party of England were attended by some hundred people. This sorry state reveals again the utter bankruptcy of the current leadership of the Communist International.

The development of the revolutionary movement in India has completely upset all calculations of the Comintern bureaucracy. The latter is in a pitiful state in which it cannot even determine positively communist attitudes towards the development in India, let alone evolve any effective action. The executive of the Communist International has not even issued a proclamation in connection with the bloody suppression of the Indian freedom struggle. It has given no instructions to the national sections about what has to be done. It has not announced what should be the strategy of the communists in India at this critical moment. It has issued no rallying cries, proposed no concrete programme of action. It is a helpless onlooker.

During the past two years when the forces for the current outbreak were gathering the Comintern pursued an ultra-left, sectarian policy in India as in other countries. With such catch phrases as 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and 'soviet republic' the handful of young, inexperienced communists in India isolated themselves from the general political life of the country. The growing radicalism of the petit bourgeois, nationalist masses which culminated in the current outbreak had not been brought under the organized influence of the proletariat. No revolutionary leadership was given to it. On the contrary, a totally negative attitude *vis-à-vis* the process prevails here.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 3, No. 20, pp. 309–10, 17 May 1930, signed article. SNR.

The 6th World Congress of the Communist International declared that except for the workers and peasants the rest of the population of India were all counter-revolutionaries. One forgot that India is a colony and that the political relations between the classes there cannot be the same as those in independent capitalist countries. The communists who acted on the basis of this incorrect assessment of the situation and the false resolution of the 6th World Congress, did not only denounce the whole Indian National Congress as counter-revolutionary but condemned also the petit bourgeois, radical leaders as traitors. No distinction was made between the oppressed lower middle class masses, who are looking in vain for revolutionary leadership in the anti-imperialist fight, and the reformist upper bourgeoisie which is seeking a compromise with imperialism. Both were thrown into the same pot, branded as traitors and counter-revolutionaries. The proletariat should have nothing to do with them. As one aspect, and for that matter the most decisive aspect of the development of the revolution, the class-struggle intensified. The proletariat demonstrated its will to fight by continuous general strikes. But due to the sectarian policy of the communists they failed to have any organizing influence on the auxiliary forces of the national revolution. The gathering and maturing forces of the national revolution plunged themselves into a trial of strength with imperialism without any particular revolutionary leadership, without a clear, common programme without a suitable organ of struggle.

The incorrect strategy pursued since the 6th Congress has damaged the revolution by slowing down its process of development. If the correct strategy had been taken by the communists the present stage of the Indian revolution could have corresponded to that which the Chinese revolution attained from 30 May 1925. During this phase evolve the revolutionary fight of the organized democratic masses against foreign imperialism and the indigenous reaction under the hegemony of the proletariat. As it is, however, the current events in India merely represent a prelude to more advanced forms of the revolutionary struggle, just as the movement in China did in 1919. The current events, whilst revealing the falseness of the official communist strategy of the past two years, will lead to the creation of mass-organs of a democratic revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat.

The present leadership of the Communist International has slowed down the growth of the revolution in India. It could now correct its error by doing what could be done in the given circumstances. To issue the catchphrase of a 'general armed uprising' at this moment is the height of criminal irresponsibility. That can only be committed by persons who do not have the least understanding of the situation.

To call for an armed uprising when the movement is extremely weak organizationally in spite of its general character, has no leadership which possesses overall confidence, and has no concrete programme, means to drive it to certain disaster. The correct communist strategy at this moment is: to create general democratic mass-organizations from the current revolutionary fight, to make the movement recognize its organizational weakness and the necessity to immediately overcome this weakness, to evolve a revolutionary leadership out of the mass-struggle, and to place the proletariat at the head of the democratic national revolution, whereby the proletariat is closely allied to all oppressed and exploited classes and counts on their support.

The lamentable helplessness of the Comintern bureaucracy has been caused by the fact that it is unable to do what needs to done at this moment without admitting its political bankruptcy. Not only the lower middle class nationalist masses are involved in a real fight with the imperialist powers of oppression. Even a growing section of the upper bourgeoisie supports the fight, although half-heartedly (they will never do more), with the aim of using it as a stake in exchange dealings with imperialism. The decisive factor, however, is not what they desire but what they are actually doing—which they have been forced to do under the pressure of circumstances. The sages at the top of the Comintern, who branded classes and individual persons according to an abstract standard as either revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, must have been very perplexed when they realized how the arch-apostle of non-violence, Gandhi, approved not only of assaults on salt-depots but also on police posts.[1] Gandhi has not undergone a change of belief. But under the pressure of circumstances he was forced to issue rallying cries which served as a lever for the development of the revolutionary fight. Although the bourgeois politicians who are today supporting the movement for their own purposes will betray it at the next opportunity, the necessary guarantee against this danger does not simply consist of denouncing them as traitors. Something positive has to be done. And that is the organization of the democratic masses, who are presently involved in the fight against imperialist oppression, under proletarian hegemony.

Since all its mechanistic calculations have turned out to be wrong, the current leaders of the Comintern are very uncertain as to the future development of the movement. Therefore they are very loath to propose any definite policies and they allow the adventurous under-officers to toy with catchphrases like an armed uprising. But that is not leadership. That is to drift helplessly with the current. The situation, however, demands a definitive, clearsighted, determined leadership. As it is lacking, the movement faces the great danger of collapsing completely demoralized through terror. At this critical moment the Communist Opposition fulfils the international task at which the official bureaucracy has so remarkably failed. In its Manifesto the Communist Opposition has correctly assessed the current strength and possibilities of the movement in India, has announced clearly its probable further line of development and has proposed a concrete programme of action for the present stage of the revolution.[2] On the other hand, it has explained to the European working class the significance of the fight for freedom of the Indian people and has called on them to support this fight. This action proves once more the historical importance of the Communist Opposition, the urgent necessity for its development and its ability to provide a true revolutionary leadership in place of the current politically bankrupt official bureaucracy.

The Communist Opposition is unable to do much at this moment in order to assist in a practical way the development of the fight in India for it does not possess the necessary material means; organizationally it is not yet sufficiently strong and because of other technical difficulties. But true to the teachings of Marx and Lenin it is nevertheless capable of indicating the correct direction despite its organizational weaknesses today.

Notes

[1] Gandhi launched the Salt-Satyagraha by marching to Dandi where he and his volunteers broke the Salt Law on 6 April 1930 'by picking up the salt lying on the sea-shore'. People were asked to 'manufacture salt whenever they wish and wherever it is convenient Gandhi then decided to raid the salt works at Dharsana, and informed the Viceroy accordingly. He was arrested. To the question if taking possession of the salt depots was not loot, his reply was: 'No. Because we do not want a grain for ourselves.' *Sitaramayya*, p. 629.

[2] The full text of the Manifesto forms the next article in this volume. SNR.

For the Freedom of the Indian People

Manifesto of the International Communist Opposition*

For more than a hundred and fifty years India has been oppressed and exploited by British imperialism. India is reputed to be a land of riches. So she is—but her riches do not belong to her people. The people are submerged in extreme poverty. More than 80 per cent of the 320,000,000 inhabitants of India are in an economic condition hardly above the starvation level. Their average per capita income is less than 30 rupees ($11.00) a year. They are deprived of the most elementary political rights. Nearly 85 per cent of the population are illiterate. There is not one primary school for every 50,000 people. In order to maintain its domination the British government of India spends nearly 50 per cent of the state revenue in the military budget; while hardly 5 per cent is devoted to the cultural and sanitary needs of the masses. A hundred and fifty years of colonial robbery has reduced the masses of India to the present state of poverty and ignorance. Every year British imperialism extracts from India a huge booty amounting to over *16,000,000 pounds* ($800,000,000).

It is but natural that the people of India should revolt against these conditions of oppression and exploitation. The movement for national freedom had already begun in the eighties of the last century. But until the world war it did not affect the masses. The big bourgeoisie agitated for constitutional reforms and were placated by petty concessions granted from time to time. The petty bourgeois intelligentsia did not approve of this beggarly policy. They claimed the right of national freedom, but in the absence of a mass movement could not push the claim effectively. They organized themselves into secret revolutionary organizations with the object of overthrowing British rule by armed uprising.

From the opening years of the present century they have contributed hundreds of martyrs to the cause of national freedom.

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* Translated from *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition (INKOPP)*, No. 4, May 1930, pp. 1–6; also in *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 3, No. 20. 17 May 1930; an English version also appeared in the American edition of *INKOPP, Revolutionary Age*, No 3, June 1930, pp. 1–5. SNR.

The revolutionary terrorist organizations were the object of brutal repression. During the war the position of the British domination was so precarious that a large measure of self-government was promised in order to win over the support of the native bourgeoisie. Afraid of revolution, the native bourgeoisie rallied to the side of the established order which granted them some political rights and economic concessions. But in consequence of the war the social basis of the nationalist movement had broadened. To provide for the expenses of the war, greater burdens had been placed upon the already bent backs of the Indian workers and peasants. Finally they revolted. Since 1918 a gigantic mass movement developed in India challenging British rule as well as the native reaction which constitutes, so to speak, the social basis of British power in India.

In the face of relentless repression by the imperialist rulers and in spite of the treacherous policy of the nationalist bourgeoisie, the movement gathered strength. In the young proletariat it found a brave vanguard. The peasant masses began to revolt against imperialist exploitation and feudal exactions. Encouraged by the revolutionary action of the toiling masses the petty bourgeois intelligentsia outgrew the narrow limits of the old terrorist organizations and came out in the open demanding the overthrow of the foreign rule. During the last few years reformist and revolutionary forces contended for the leadership of the nationalist movement. British imperialism sought to strengthen the position of the reformist bourgeoisie by promising further measures of self-government and by actual economic concessions. But the *rapprochement* between foreign imperialism and the native bourgeoisie sharpened the class antagonisms inside the nationalist movement—revolutionizing it further under the pressure of the working class. The labour movement developed very rapidly. The youthful proletariat acquired valuable experience in great industrial conflicts which, under the given conditions of the country, usually assume a strong political complexion. In recent years the country was swept by a mighty wave of mass strikes and lock-outs in which the working class demonstrated admirable solidarity, power of resistance and heroism. The peasantry was affected by the revolutionary struggle in the cities. They supported the striking or locked-out workers by supplying food. Besides, they themselves took up the fight for their own interests. Agrarian disturbance began to break out in various parts of the country.

Alarmed by the situation, British imperialism sought to split the movement. On the one hand, it promised measures of self-government; and on the other, it opened a fierce attack upon the working class. Through provocation every great industrial dispute developed into a clash with the police and the military. Unarmed workers were shot down. Practically all the revolutionary trade union leaders were arrested as 'Bolshevik agents'. The least attempt for organizing a political party of the proletariat was drastically dealt with. A law was passed making trade unions subject to the strictest control by the police. In the teeth of this reign of terror the working class conducted the struggle not only for their own immediate interests, but as the vanguard of the oppressed masses fighting for national freedom. The imperialist booty represents a part of the value produced by the workers. The least improvement of the condition of the toiling masses, therefore, means an encroachment upon the privileges of imperialism. Under these circumstances the struggle of the workers for even the least immediate demands has a political significance. It is inseparably connected with the struggle for the overthrow of imperialist domination.

Independent revolutionary activity of the working class not only encouraged the petty bourgeois intelligentsia to raise radical political demands, but even a section of the big bourgeoisie stiffened its back. They refused to be satisfied with the promise of reform and demanded its immediate introduction. So the design of imperialism was frustrated. Instead of being split, the nationalist movement developed into a broad anti-imperialist front, still under the leadership of the reformist bourgeoisie but largely dominated by the working class. At its forty-third annual meeting, held towards the end of the last year, the National Congress declared in favour of complete national independence. The present situation in India has been created by activities to endorse this demand.

Although the movement is objectively revolutionary—will put an end to imperialist domination eventually—it is still under reformist leadership. Men like Gandhi reluctantly subscribed to the present radical programme of the National Congress with the object of maintaining their hold upon the movement so that they might check its development in a revolutionary direction. But the calculations have been upset by the stormy march of events. The attack upon the state salt monopoly has developed into a general clash with the entire state power. Hoping that Gandhi would be able to keep the movement within reformist bounds, the government, in the beginning, was rather indulgent to him. But Gandhi, involuntarily, acted simply as the fuse setting fire to the powder-magazine. His own action mocked at his doctrine of non-violence. As soon as the authority of the government was flouted, the heavy hand of repression came down upon the offenders. These had either to surrender or retaliate. Practical experience taught the followers of Gandhi to disregard his teachings and, in order not to lose his hold upon the movement, the apostle of non-violence himself advocated such actions as taking possession of the stores of salt and even storming of the police-stations. Acting under the irresistible pressure of the revolutionary masses Gandhi forfeited the indulgence of the government, and was put under detention.

The violation of the salt monopoly was only a signal. Great mass demonstrations took place throughout the country. The democratic masses burst the bounds of reformist leadership and came out on the streets demonstrating their will to fight for national freedom. As is always the case, violence was first used by the established authorities. Before Gandhi, dozens of petty bourgeois radical leaders, in closer contact with the masses, had been arrested. Demonstrations of protest had been violently suppressed, killing many and wounding hundreds more. Under such provocation, outburst of violence as retaliation was inevitable. This, in its turn, provided more plausible reasons to the government to intensify its repressions. The little freedom of press that ever existed has been abolished. Leading nationalist press organs are suppressed by the order of a local official. Meetings are dispersed by the armed police and military. Large cities are practically under martial law. In short, a veritable reign of terror is in force, the English Viceroy exercising despotic power.

A whole nation is in revolt against foreign domination and imperialism tries to suppress it with bloody ferocity. At this critical moment the affairs of the British Empire are managed by people who call themselves Socialists representing the working class. Is the freedom of the Indian people antagonistic to the interests of the British proletariat? Should the workers of England support the suppression of the fight for freedom in India? Certainly not! The English workers do not derive any benefit from the exploitation of the Indian masses. On the contrary, the command of the vast source of cheap labour in India enables the British bourgeoisie to lower the standard of living of the workers at home. The Indian market is no longer a British monopoly. British goods now must compete there with others. That is, British hold upon the Indian market can be maintained only by reducing the cost of production at home—by increasing the exploitation of the workers. India is the largest market for British cotton industry. For years this has been in heavy depression. The banks refuse to finance the refitting of the industry with modern machinery but they have recently undertaken the rationalization of the cotton industry in India. The result will be the further loss of the Indian market for the British cotton industry, and more unemployment and less wages for the British workers. So, the defence of the Empire is no concern of the working class. Already in the early days of colonial expansion Engels wrote that the proletarian revolution in England was conditional upon the break-up of the Empire. Marx also said that a nation that holds others in subjugation could not itself be free.

In its shameless effort to crush the Indian people's fight for freedom the 'Labour Government' of MacDonald does not serve the interest of the working class; it acts as the agent of imperialism. The resolution of the National Congress was disregarded by the MacDonald Government as representing the desires of a small minority. The events of the last few weeks have shown that the entire nation, with the exception of a small minority, stands behind the National Congress.. Even a large section of the big bourgeoisie, who as a class would come to an agreement with imperialism should acceptable terms be offered, has joined the mass movement for freedom. The President of the Legislative Assembly has resigned and has placed himself at the head of the movement for the boycott of British goods. Except the rank reactionary class of feudal chiefs and landlords—counting altogether not more than 8,000,000 in a population of 320,000,000—only a small upper stratum of the bourgeoisie closely connected with the state apparatus and imperialist finance still remain outside the movement. And even they are by no means fully satisfied with the delay in granting the promised reform. The imperialists point to the religious antagonisms as a pretext for the British rule in India. But these antagonisms are largely a creation of British rule. They concern only a handful of office-hunters and religious fanatics usually paid by the government. Class interests of the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and of the workers on the other, eliminate religious antagonisms. As far as the people as a whole is concerned, religious antagonisms have no material basis.

There is, therefore, absolutely no justification for the British domination in India. On the contrary, it is positively harmful to the workers of Britain, and to the world proletariat. Therefore, the struggle of the Indian people for freedom must be supported by the workers of the world, and, in the first place, by those of England.

WORKERS OF BRITAIN! Organize mass meetings and demonstrations in support of India's right to freedom! Denounce the imperialist policy of the MacDonald Government! Demand the suspension of all the repressive measures in India, the release of all political prisoners and the complete freedom of the press, platform and assembly! Support the right of the Indian people to revolt against the British rule with the object of overthrowing it!

WORKERS OF THE WORLD! Express your solidarity with the Indian people through mass meetings and demonstrations! Unless this is done, the responsibility for the oppression of the Indian people rests upon every member of the trade union and political organizations affiliated to the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions and the

Second (Socialist) International—for these bodies endorse the imperialist policy of the MacDonald Government.

Finally we appeal to the oppressed people of India to be alive to the weaknesses of their movement with the object of removing them so that their struggle for freedom may successfully defy the forces of repression and advance mightily towards the final victory. All the revolutionary class-conscious workers of the world are bound to support the fight of the Indian people for freedom. But the success of the fight, in the first line, depends upon the efforts of the Indian masses. The events of the last few years and particularly of the last few weeks have clearly shown that the will to fight for freedom is there. But they have also shown that there is lacking an organized leadership which can systematically marshall the popular forces and employ them effectively. The leadership of a gigantic mass movement cannot be vested in individuals, no matter how numerous or how efficient they are. The army must have a general staff to be led in the battle. The National Congress has failed to serve the purpose. It was very useful in the period of propaganda and agitation but it cannot act as a political party leading the people in actual struggle. Therefore, the creation of a National Revolutionary Party is the task of the movement.

The working class also has not been able to influence the situation effectively because of the weakness of its political Party. To accomplish its task as the vanguard of the fight for national freedom as well as to defend its class interests, the proletariat must organize itself into revolutionary trade unions; it must build up a strong mass Communist Party, to carry on, on the basis of the fundamentals and aims of Communism, activity in the ranks of the national revolution so as to lead it by conviction to the further aim, the overthrow of capitalist class domination and the establishment of the Soviet state as a transition to a classless Socialist society.

Unless these conditions are fulfilled, the movement will not be able to withstand the reign of terror, to develop from the present elemental to a higher and better organized stage. The Simon Report will be out soon. Alarmed by the present revolutionary development, imperialism is withholding the publication of the report in order to modify it in accordance with the situation. The declaration for the grant of some definite reforms immediately—even the immediate calling of the Round Table Conference—is sure to disrupt the present broad united front. The big bourgeoisie will desert the movement. It must be determined beforehand what should be the attitude of the revolutionary forces at that crisis. Boycott of the Conference and of its resolution will be only a negative attitude. Some alternative demand must be put forward. Simply to declare for complete independence will not be enough. There must be some concrete form for asserting the right to independence. The alternative demand should be *the election of a constituent assembly for deciding the political future of India.* Challenge the tutelage of imperialism and assert practically the sovereign right of the people and the right of revolt to defend that sovereignty.

The basis of that popular organ of power—the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY—should be laid now. That should be the concrete outcome of the present stage of the struggle. Preparations should be made for the development of the movement into a general insurrection, finally challenging the power of imperialism. To give some organized form to the awakened popular energy is the most important part of the work of preparation. This can be done by the creation of committees representing the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, small traders and, if possible, native soldiers. These committees are to conduct the struggle constantly on the immediate demands of their constituent elements, rallying around them the masses in ever-growing numbers. They are to conduct the struggle for the freedom of the press, platform and assembly, for the release of political prisoners, for an 8-hour day, higher wages, reduction of rents and taxes. Finally they are to begin the agitation for the election of the Constituent Assembly. Along this road will revolutionary India, supported by the action of the international working class and in alliance with the Soviet Union, win complete independence.

In this way the ground will be prepared for the rise of an organ of popular sovereignty not hanging in the air, but with its roots struck deep in the soil of the democratic masses organized under a centralized collective leadership. No power on earth can crush a movement so solidly based upon the democratic masses—the overwhelming majority of the people. If attacked, as it surely will be, it will then have ample power not only to defend itself, but to go over to the final offensive—to the general armed insurrection which will overthrow foreign rule and establish a free national democratic state!

DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM!

LONG LIVE FREE INDIA!

(Berlin, 10 May 1930)

The Group of Oppositional Indian Communists
The Communist Party of the USA (Majority Group)
The Communist Party of Germany (Opposition)
The Communist Party of France (Opposition), Alsace District.
The Communist Party of Austria (Opposition)
The Communist Party of Sweden
The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Opposition)
(The signatures of other Opposition groups were not available at this date. They will be added later.)

Sixteenth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted the famous Five Year Plan of a colossal economic development at its last Party Congress which was held 2 years ago. The execution of the Plan was started with the slogan—'Catch up with the Capitalist countries and overtake them'. The Plan of economic reconstruction became the subject of intensive discussions among the leading members of the CPSU. Finally, those Comrades, who were not completely in agreement with the Plan or who questioned its feasibility, or advocated its implementation at a slower pace, were removed from the leadership of the Party. Thus the Central Committee of the Party, completely dominated by Stalin, had a free hand for implementation of its policy. It is the task of the Sixteenth Congress to make an assessment of the situation—to revise the original plan, to accelerate or slow down the speed of its implementation in the light of experience gathered during the last two years. This will logically have its political significance providing it with the decisive reply to the question which has remained outstanding since long: 'Is the present system of leading the Party faultless at the national and international level, or should it be radically changed?'

It has now become adequately clear that collectivization of agriculture was not correctly worked out and implemented, and this is indeed due primarily to the Party leadership. It has been a basic premise of socialist reconstruction that agriculture should be transformed to the stage of collective production. But at the same time, one has to know what could be implemented under the given circumstances. A premature step or any hasty action was destined to seriously endanger the revolution, instead of being an advance towards socialism. The plan to force collectivization of agriculture had almost led to a catastrophe. Stalin himself admits this in his reply to the comrades engaged in the collective economy:

> The danger is that these mistakes lead directly to a process of disintegration, to discrediting the movement for collectivization itself, to a conflit with the middle peasants, to a disorganization of the rural poor, to confusion in

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* Translated from *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition*, Vol. I, issue no. 5, May–June 1930. Signed article by M. N. Roy. SNR.

> our rank and file, to weakening the entire achievement of socialistic reconstruction and to the upliftment of the rich peasants. In short, these mistakes lead to our deviation from the path of strengthening our alliance with the masses of the peasantry, from the path of strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, and they lead us to an alienation from the masses, to a path which leads to the graveyard of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Sixteenth Party Congress which follows the guidance of the leadership of the Party is on the point of making a similar confession. In the theses on the collectivization of agriculture which have been drafted by Yakovlev we read the following:

> If the Central Committee had not corrected this mistake at the due time, then it would have led to the danger of a breakdown of the whole of the campaign for collectivization of agriculture, to a collapse of the foundation of the Soviet state, of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

It is useless to claim that the whole revolution was led so dangerously to the brink of a catastrophe only by mistake in the details during the implementation of the Plan, which itself was framed carefully. These mistakes were not committed at a time. These have been committed during the whole period since the inception of the Plan. In fact, the improvisation of the 'huge collectives', which one finally discovered were but dead souls, was advanced as proof of the big victory till the end of 1929. In reality, the mistakes, which endangered the revolution so seriously, did not envision the excesses committed by the lower party officials, who had grown success-dizzy. These mistakes were ingrained in the nature of the Plan itself. As a result of the want of necessary material resources, the Plan could be implemented by force, as it actually happened to a large extent, only by employing detrimental bureaucratic measures. The actual position was not recognized on the basis of experience and the Plan was not accordingly revised. This should not have happened. Unfortunately, the Plan was framed first and foremost as a weapon in the factional fight within the party.

We have no wish to celebrate the 'breakdown' of the collectivization Plan. Our attitude to the essential components of this policy was made clear from the very beginning. We supported unconditionally the general principles of the Five Year Plan, i.e. the economic reconstruction of the Soviet Union according to a plan chalked out earlier, as opposed to the chaotic organization of capitalist production. We believed at the same time that the plan would misfire in its details, in case the old proverb was not observed during its framing: 'Cut your coat according to your cloth.' We did not have the desire to predict defeat and disaster. We have a vital interest in the matter. We are fully in accord with this policy in principle and hence we had naturally no reason to overlook the difficulties of the situation. We apprehend that as a result of the poison of factional fight, the Party congress will not be in a position to learn from the experience so that the essentially correct policy can be implemented in future with adequate attention to the realities of the situation. Therefore, we have to make a critical overview of what has happened in the hope that the lessons of the experience will urge upon the International Communist movement that it tries to be in a position on its own part to influence further development of the USSR in the direction of improvement.

Let us recapitulate our stand in broad outlines in this regard. The characteristic feature of our opposition to the present policy and leadership of the Comintern is that our opposition is not dependent upon the factional feud within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. We take our position towards the Russian question from the major consideration of the interest of the Proletarian Revolution. We support or condemn this or that faction within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union according to their actions. As we were determining our attitude to the policies within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union regarding the Five Year Plan, we wrote:

> In view of the fact that the implementation of the New Economic Policy engendered an alarming growth of the new capitalist elements, a further economic development of the Soviet Union had to signify an attack against these elements. Otherwise, not only the basis of the socialist economy, which was laid during the period of the New Economic Policy, but also even the dictatorship of the proletariat itself, will be endangered.

Till that point of time, the rightist Opposition, which was being led by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky, was blamed on the ground that it was questioning the correctness of the policy, which intended to attack the new capitalist elements, which were generated by the New Economic Policy. The standpoint of these comrades was known to the international Communist movement in such a manner as the official press ventilated it. That was very inadequate material to enable one to form a definite opinion. But in the context of class struggle, neutrality is impermissible. Therefore, we defined in the following words our attitude in principle to this issue:

> In case some members of the Russian Party had followed a line which signified the task of the struggle immediately as accomplishment of the basis of the socialist economy, then they must be condemned by the International.

As we assessed the situation in the village where class struggle was becoming intensive, we declared:

> During this crisis the policy of concession to the non-proletarian elements amounts to the confession that the social character of the State must be changed, that the revolution must transform itself to a Bourgeois Democratic Revolution.

In concrete terms we affirmed as follows:

> The situation will always remain threatened by the new elements of Capitalism in the agricultural sector, so long as this is not made secondary to the process of collectivization. Therefore, the development of the Soviet economy should follow parallel lines: priority to production of the means of production, and accomplishment of a basis of the socialist production in the agricultural sector.

This attitude was as clear as was possible on the basis of the materials available. After all we considered it as being our revolutionary obligation to point out the difficulties of the situation, which the policy, which was essentially correct, was bound to face. In case the difficulties were not correctly assessed, the policy would also be formulated incorrectly, and this would inevitably lead to damage during its application. We wrote:

> While agreeing in principle with the Five Year Plan and knowing that its implementation requires a strong determination, one should not underestimate the difficulties which stand on the way. There exists, for example, the danger of a severe financial crisis, which could develop as a result of the attempt to establish collective agriculture quickly. Up to now a very large part of the public finance has originated from the peasantry; in other words, accumulation has taken place to a large extent in the agricultural sector of the national economy. Now the process must be a reverse one. A very substantial part of the new capital must be invested in agriculture, if the planned enormous agricultural collectives are to be made successful quickly. Most likely it will derange the whole organization of the public finance and, as a result of that, the whole national economy, which depends to a large extent upon the former.

Collectivization of agriculture is an important step towards the whole process of the socialist reconstruction of the economy. The goal is, at the first instance, to increase agricultural production and, secondly, to reduce the contradiction between the city and the village. During the years from 1918 to 1929 the shortage of food and provision became continuously more and more critical. The village economy was to a large extent controlled by the rich peasants under the conditions of private small holdings, which couducted resistance successfully to the endeavours of the co-operatives to exercise control on the flow of grains. The peasants, as private producers, did not want to hand over their grains, if they did not get something as a counter offer. What they wanted was industrial goods. Since the Five

Year Plan correctly laid emphasis on the production of means of production in the industrial sector of the national economy, the shortage of industrial goods for consumption continued. Since the city would not provide them with adequate goods which they required, the peasants refused to send their products to the city. In the given conditions, the only solution of this problem was to import industrial goods from abroad. But since adequate credit was not available, an adequate export had to be there in order to be able to pay for the imported goods. The balance of the foreign trade could be maintained by the export of the agricultural products. But after the requirements of the countryside were satisfied, the surplus for export was very small. One had, therefore, to increase productivity in the agricultural sector. That was not possible without the introduction of better means of production. But the application of modern machinery is possible only in large agricultural farms. Therefore, the necessity for the collectivization of agriculture.

But the plan did not undertake such a task, which was impossible under the given circumstances. In five years a large percentage of the peasantry was to be collectivized. But how far this intention was to be realized could be decided only on the basis of existing material sources of supply. Would it be possible to mop up the required capital (not only the working capital but also fixed capital) for the purpose? Where would it come from? That is the decisive question. The plan did not evidently give to this life-and-death question adequate attention, and the shortage of adequate capital made the huge collective farms as good as 'dead souls'. This is now officially recognized. In his draft thesis, Yakovlev remembers Lenin's claim that without the financial help of the State, collective management of agriculture is not possible. It may be observed that Yakovlev invokes the authority of Lenin only at the 12th hour and makes out a theory on the basis of a not very correct interpretation of this view. But we do not want to indulge in this discussion here. What is relevant for our present purpose is this, that he, as official spokesman of the Central Committee, admits that:

> These mistakes and misinterpretations, among others, take the form that the finances are held back, which the Government allocates for the maintenance of the collective farming.

According to this thesis, the holding back of the promised credit was the result of excesses by some stupid bureaucrats. As a matter of fact, this (the shortage of credit) is an objective difficulty. Credit was not held back; the State was simply not in a position to dispense the credit without withdrawing its capital reserves from some other branch of the economy. Besides that, the process of compulsive collectivization created, at least on paper, immense 'dead souls'. Millions of private undertakings were thereby eliminated, as a result of which the State was being progressively deprived of a source of revenue, which further signified shrinkage of its credit. On the other hand, the production of grains fell actually below the current level, since many of the collectivized lands were not tilled as a result of shortage of capital and machinery. In view of this loss of balance in agricultural production, a general retreat had to take place. Neither the bureaucratic excesses are mainly to be blamed, not is the policy of the collectivization itself incorrect. However, the policy was framed more under the compulsions of the factional fight within the party than after a careful calculation of the factors which were to be taken into consideration.

The retreat will contribute towards the reinforcement of what in reality has been achieved, if the coming Party Congress acknowledges the mistake in the Plan openly and suitably revises it in the light of bitter experience of the real situation. But factional fight on the one hand and the leadership of the Party on the other obstruct such a handling of the matter. The failure of the policy of compulsive collectivization cannot be concealed any longer. That has strengthened the position of the Opposition. Sharp criticisms are being made increasingly from all sides against the Party leadership. In view of these attacks the present Party leadership does not have the courage to subject the plan of collectivization to a critical revision, since they are afraid that that will politically signify a surrender, which might result in their removal from the leadership.

If one sets aside the demagogy, how do things really look like? Comrade Molotov stated in his report to the meeting of the Enlarged Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on 25 February:

> The radical change in the speed of the development of collective agriculture, which made itself felt in the second half of the last year, explains an incident of extraordinary significance for the purpose of Communism. The significant incident is that the central figure in agriculture, the middle peasant, has turned towards socialism. Large masses of peasants, poor and middle, have been brought within purview of collectivization. Total collectivization, that is those in which 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the peasantry take part, is now the characteristic trend not only of individual districts and areas, but of entire regions and national republics . . . Collectivization has developed in the last weeks specially quickly. During the last 30 days an equal number of farmsteads have registered themselves in the collective agriculture, as during the earlier 12 years.

Hardly a week later Stalin disclosed in his sensational article 'Many have been made success-dizzy' the astonishing nature of the inflated collectivization, and he admonished strongly the stupid bureaucratic decree, as a result of which collectivization was realized only on paper. Now we find in the thesis, which was submitted by the Commissariat for Agriculture (Yakovlev), that 'till the early part of this year 40 to 50 per cent of the farmsteads in the grain-producing districts have enrolled themselves in the collectives'. The percentage for the entire Soviet Union must, therefore, be much less. Here also we find a big contradiction between the actual performance and what was reported by an official speaker of the Party leadership to an important international body. Comrade Molotov exaggerated the progress of the collectivization by 90 to 100 per cent. And that was not an offence of an individual. His report must have been approved by the Politbureau.

The last report of the Commissariat for Agriculture clarifies the situation to a greater extent. Till 15 May altogether 50 million hectares of land have been sowed. To this belong 23.8 million hectares of collective farming. That is a very big fall from the dizzy height of 80 per cent to 90 per cent for the entire Soviet Union, as was reported by Molotov two-and-a-half months ago. On the other hand, 24.3 million hectares of sowed land have reverted to individual farming. Hence, apparently, a process of de-collectivization has taken place. The report of the Commissariat for Agriculture shows that in the last 5 days of the relevant period the area sowed by individual farms and peasants has grown by 4.31 million hectares, whereas the area of the collective farms has grown by 1.97 million hectares.

This indicates a very definite turn. Large stretches of land, which were transformed formally by bureaucratic decree into a huge sector of collective economy, could not be made productive. Material resources required for such large-scale undertakings were lacking. Collectivization threatened to defeat its own purpose, namely, increase in the production of grain. Moreover, the formal disappearance of the individual peasant economy deprived the State of a substantial source of revenue. As a result, the interest of the proletarian state and the requirement for laying the basis of socialist reconstruction, namely, the strengthening of industry, suffered. A retreat in the war against outdated and uneconomic private organization in agriculture has taken place. The experience has taught that agricultural production has still to take place to a large extent on the basis of the New Economic Policy. 'The central figure in agriculture'—the middle peasant—cannot still be led, not its majority, to Communism directly. The way to socialistic reconstruction still goes through an alliance with them as individual producers.

The party as a whole can no longer remain blind to the consequences of the collectivization campaign. There is the danger of reverting to War Communism, but on the other hand, a good advance has been made in the direction of socialistic reconstruction. The task in the near future is not to confuse the situation through cheap demogogy and a play of bluffs; it lies in evolving the ways and means to strengthen what has been realized with much difficulty, so that much can be built on the basis laid in that manner. The experience has taught that those who were of the opinion that collectivization of agriculture could not yet be undertaken were not correct. On the other hand, it has also taught that doubt about the actual result of the campaign was quite reasonable. And, in fact, it (doubt) is reasonable to such an extent that the rightist Opposition, which was declared last year as liquidated, has again achieved enough strength to require to be fought. The doubt develops from the objective condition and, therefore, must influence the policy of the Party. The sudden postponement of the Party Congress by 10 days indicates, that the new alignment of the forces—a change of policy—may be taking place behind the curtains. But the issue cannot, as a matter of fact, be set in the proper perspective by inner manoeuvres in the Party. For this purpose, the Sixteenth Party Congress of the CPSU ought to denounce the present system of the leadership. However, the Party Congress will not do it.[1]

11.6.1930.

Note

[1] The Sixteenth Congress of the CPSU was held from 26 June to 13 July 1930. Bukharin was not present, but Rykov and Tomsky made avowals of their 'rightist errors' in the most abject terms. In 1930 there were 'wholesale expulsions of trade union communists', and 'committees of entire party organizations were removed and replaced'. 'There was open war in the villages, and the desperate peasants did not hesitate to kill any communists regarding them as their natural enemies.' The Congress proclaimed that 'collectivization of agriculture could be carried out on a voluntary basis', but stressed that 'savage resistance' was to be expected from the *kulak*.

Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Methuen, 1970, pp. 389–94. *CPSU Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences, and Central Committee Plenary Meetings*, 3 vols. (7th edition), Marx–Engels–Lenin–Stalin Institute, Moscow, 1954, Vol. III. SNR.

The Tactical Problems of the Indian Revolution*

Immediate Perspectives of the Nationalist Movement

After a short period of stormy development, the movement in India is approaching a crisis. The crisis will be accelerated through publication of the report of the Simon Commission and through the political declaration of the British government which will follow upon it. The first part of this report has already appeared; the other part containing positive recommendations for India, will appear in two weeks. The tone of the first part of the report, which discusses the existing conditions, allows no doubt as to the nature of the positive proposals. The demands of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie will not be entirely met. At the same time the old promise of self-government within the British Empire will take on more definite forms. This promise goes hand in hand with certain political concessions to the native bourgeoisie. This will be enough to loosen sections of the nationalist bourgeoisie from the revolutionary movement of the oppressed masses. The oppressed masses of India represent 90 per cent of the entire population and include not only the workers and the peasants but also a huge number of other elements who belong with the bourgeoisie in social position. A few figures provide us with a picture of this situation. The princes, the feudal landowners and their adherents, amount all in all to about 8,000,000. The big bourgeoisie, those involved in modern industry and commerce, run up to 1½ million at the very highest. On the other hand the industrial proletariat is numerically hardly stronger than a little over 4 million. If we include those employed in the big capitalist plantations, in trade, in distribution, in little shops and in urban handicrafts, the strength of the proletariat rises to 10 million. Thus we account for 20 million out of a total population of 320,000,000. The overwhelming majority of the rest consist of peasants who make up about 250 million. Therefore there are not less than 50 million people who belong to the bourgeoisie according to their social position but who are at the same time to be counted among the oppressed masses.

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Role of Petty Bourgeoisie

The most active elements of the nationalist movement are recruited from these oppressed sections of the bourgeoisie. The National Congress, which essentially represents the interests of the native bourgeoisie, is composed to a very large degree out of these middle elements of the population. The political radicalization of these strata has greatly contributed to the stormy events of recent weeks. Economic concessions to native capitalism, which create the basis for the counter-revolutionary common front between the nationalist bourgeoisie and imperialism, cannot improve the conditions of these middle elements. On the contrary the protective demands of the native bourgeoisie means destruction for petty trade. Moreover, by setting the prices for all factory products, whether imported or domestic, and by setting them high, the protective system accentuates the oppression of the vast mass of the population. In spite of this oppression through foreign and native capitalism, the social outlook of the middle class remains bourgeois. The present political unrest will certainly not end with the acceptance by the bourgeois nationalist leaders of any concessions offered them by imperialism paraded as the 'substance of independence'.

The immediate perspectives of the movement appear, therefore, that the National Congress will reject the constitutional reforms offered on the basis of the Simon Report and that the conference proposed by the British government will be boycotted. Disregarding what the leaders of the National Congress may wish, the movement will, in all probability, take this development. The leaders, including Gandhi, did not place themselves willingly at the head of the present mass uprising; they were compelled to do this. Their present role is not to be judged by what they desire but rather by what they do—by their political actions. It is clear that they would be only too happy to find a way out of their unpleasant situation. At the same time, however, they do not under any circumstances want to lose their hold on the movement through any premature action against the expressed will of their followers. Gandhi has already declared himself ready to negotiate with the imperialist rulers about a *modus vivendi* as long as it will be compatible with the 'substance of independence'. The 'substance of independence' may mean anything; essentially it is based upon the interests of native capitalism. But it is precisely here that Gandhi and the other leaders of the National Congress will come into conflict with the growing dissatisfaction of his supporters. The former (Gandhi and his friends) are not against capitalism; nor are they consciously for a social revolution (even in the bourgeois sense); their political demands are limited essentially to the transference of all power to the native bourgeoisie. The existing conditions weigh heavily upon them and the greatest reforms which the Simon Commission will be able to propose will hardly be such as to make any essential change in this. The National Congress would perhaps like to peacefully lay down its weapons (boycott, passive resistance and civil disobedience—all of which lead to stormy outbreaks of an acute revolutionary nature) if dominion status, that is complete self-administration, were guaranteed. But dominion status is altogether out of the question today and even dominion status could not be achieved without real struggle. Consequently their outlook for the immediate future is not for peace.

How Is Proletarian Hegemony to be Attained?

The struggle will continue. Merely a redistribution of forces is facing us. The ranks of the Nationalists will diminish. There can be no doubt as to the conduct of the big bourgeoisie which composes only a tiny minority of the entire population. Today they are still trying to utilize the mass movement as a weapon for themselves. What steps their representatives in the National Congress will take still remains doubtful, but it is hardly of importance as far as the general perspectives of the situation are concerned—a situation that manifests itself in the development of the bourgeois-national revolution against the counter-revolutionary will of the big bourgeoisie. With or without the approval of its leaders the National Congress will continue its anti-imperialist struggle. And the unfolding of the anti-imperialist struggle will necessarily bring up the correct social questions, which the petty bourgeoisie, in spite of all its political radicalism, is not in a position to solve.

It is from this point of view that the Communists must approach the tactical problems of the Indian revolution. How is the political leadership of the proletariat in the struggle against imperialism to be achieved? This is the central question of the day. The coming crisis in the nationalist movement offers the Communists the opportunity to realize the hegemony of the proletariat. Whatever may be the position the leaders of the National Congress will adopt, the petty bourgeois masses of the Congress cannot be satisfied with any sort of promise about the 'substance of independence'. But they are unable to give positive form to the struggle into which they have entered. As long as their activity is not concentrated on a concrete basis, their energy will be frittered away in ineffective negative activity. Ineffective activity with negative slogans, such as boycott, will only keep them away from the road to revolutionary struggle. Such slogans may still be quite satisfactory today for the representatives of native capitalism, such as Gandhi and the other leaders of the National Congress. And the tasks of the Communists can hardly be limited to calling these leaders counter-revolutionaries. The task of the Communists consists in taking up the struggle for actual leadership and this can only be accomplished by setting up positive demands corresponding to the interests of those classes that form the social basis of the movement. The nationalist masses united under the banner of the National Congress will break the influence of the representatives of the counter-revolutionary sections of the big bourgeoisie if the leaders of the masses put forward such demands as are supported by the people. Not only the demands of the workers and peasants but also those of the oppressed sections of the bourgeoisie cannot be fulfilled except through revolutionary struggle. This will become the test for leaders like Gandhi. Through the propaganda of such demands the Communists will lead the proletariat in the struggle for real political leadership in the anti-imperialist and revolutionary democratic movement.

The Basis for the Constituent Assembly

The Communists cannot draw in the bourgeois–democratic nationalist masses in a revolutionary struggle with slogans representing the maximum demands of the workers and the peasants. Above all, a common platform must be worked out. The struggle against imperialist absolutism, in which the overwhelming majority of the entire population is interested, presupposes such a platform. In other words: the Communists must in the very beginning issue a central slogan to give positive form to the struggle for national liberation. What should this slogan be under the given circumstances? It must be the concrete expression of the striving for the recognition of the right of self-administration. The oppressed masses of India must create a democratic organ of power as a weapon in the growing struggle against imperialism. The proper slogan in the present situation is therefore the election of a Constituent Assembly. As a practical rejection of the self-endowed right of the British Parliament to decide on the political future of the Indian people, the slogan of a Constituent Assembly will find an echo in the spirit of rebellion dominating the whole land. On the other hand, the agitation for a Constituent Assembly will lift the movement from the atmosphere of ineffective negation to that stage of higher development which will be a challenge to the ruling powers. In such a situation the Nationalists will be forced to look around for allies. They will be forced to support the demands of the peasant masses, that is, to come out for a solution of the basic problems of the bourgeois–democratic revolution. Thus the development of the bourgeois–democratic revolution will develop under the political leadership of the proletariat.

The development of the bourgeois–democratic revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat and against the will of the bourgeoisie cannot end with the creation of a democratic state. In India the Constituent Assembly will be something different from a bourgeois parliament. It must be called into life as the organ of the democratic dictatorship, i.e. as an organ of struggle, through which the oppressed masses will seize political power. As a guarantee that the Constituent Assembly should in fact arise as a basis for such a revolutionary state, it must be elected not through universal suffrage but through local committees of the National Congress enlarged through the drawing in of representatives of workers, peasants, students, small traders, employees, and later soldier organizations. The organizations of these various oppressed and exploited classes have their various demands; they will send their delegates first to the Congress committee and finally to the Constituent Assembly in order to carry through their demands. The workers and peasants together will constitute the overwhelming majority in these organs of struggle and power. Organized independently on the basis of their class interests they will dominate the situation.

The Constituent Assembly will not be elected in order to adopt a formal constitution but as an instrument for the realization of a programme of national democratic revolution worked out on the basis of the demands of the oppressed classes which form its social basis. Agitation on the basis of the slogan will prepare the basis for a general armed uprising for the overthrow of the dominant political and social system. The Constituent Assembly as an organ of the revolutionary democratic power can only arise out of a victorious uprising.

The proposed Constituent Assembly is something quite different from the bourgeois parliament but it is nevertheless no Soviet. It is the organ of the democratic dictatorship—a very special type that arises out of the developing bourgeois–democratic revolution under the political leadership of the proletariat. The slogan of Constituent Assembly with its democratic colour corresponds to the social character of the revolution and at the same time its realization will drive the revolution beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy.

Stalin Triumphs*

The XVI Congress of the CP of the USSR has just taken place. But its resolutions are not yet available in their full text so that in this number we are not in a position to examine them in detail and definitely state our attitude towards them. But there is sufficient material available as a basis for some general observations regarding the main line of the Congress.

The Congress was exactly what it was expected to be. The delegates were exclusively defenders of the official policy. They assembled in the Congress not to examine past achievements critically with the object of learning from the mistakes committed in the formulation and execution of the essentially correct general line. Their role was to sing panegyrics. The war-cry against the 'Right Opposition' dominated the Congress. But as an evidence of the complete defeat of this 'main danger', Stalin boastingly pointed out that not one single representative of the Opposition was present at the Congress. Apparently then, a fierce battle was waged against a non-existing enemy. In such an atmosphere of bureaucratic stage-setting hardly any objective deliberation is possible. As a matter of fact, the Opposition is not so completely liquidated as it appeared to be in the Congress. Or else—why all the fire concentrated upon it? What happened is that the powerful bureaucratic apparatus succeeded in throttling the voice of self-criticism.

Rapid industrial development is broadening the social basis of the Party. New blood is being infused in the proletariat. In consequence, the conditions making for bureaucratism are shaken. These forces growing out of the process of progressive Socialist construction are naturally critical, but they are not to be identified with any opposition faction. Had it been so, then the capitulation of Tomsky, Rykoff and Uglanoff would have been welcomed as the sign for the decomposition of all opposition inside the Party. The real danger for the Party is that on the pretext of fighting 'right opportunism' the bureaucratic apparatus will seek to discourage the development of forces making for the realization of the principle of democratic centralism.

The forces for the internal democratization of the Party have become so powerful that the apparatus was not quite sure that they could be altogether kept out of the Congress. In view of this Stalin was rather cautious in his report. He took off the gloves in the fight against the Opposition only in his speech winding up the debate which revealed that the bureaucracy entirely dominated the Congress. The capitulation of his factional foes encouraged him to declare open war upon all those daring to cross his will. The last sentence of his concluding speech is really ominous. It heralded a new campaign of expulsion which may count among its victims old leaders of the Party like Bukharin, Tomsky, Rykoff, etc.

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Experience has demonstrated the correctness of the opposition to the policy of forced collectivization of agriculture. Stalin and his followers themselves have admitted the dangerous mistake, in deed if not in word. The Central Committee has abandoned the aspects of the general line which failed to receive the approval of many responsible members not only of the CPSU but of the entire International. Those who adopted a critical attitude towards certain defective aspects of the Five-Years Plan not from a factional point of view but in the interest of the Party as a whole, sincerely welcome the modification introduced just before the Party Congress. In view of the modification they can now fully support the policy and actively participate in its execution. The bureaucratic apparatus responsible for the 'distortions and exaggeration' of the general line now abandoned, may not admit its mistake. But the Party rank and file, and the masses immediately around the Party, draw their own conclusion. The Opposition has done a great service to the Party. It has forced the Party leadership to abandon a policy which 'greatly endangered the revolution itself' (Stalin). Consequently, it is to be expected that the forces operating against the Party bureaucracy will rally around those whose political sagacity has been borne out in practice. Thus, the opposition will outgrow its original factional limits and be absorbed in the entire Party contributing to its liberation from bureaucratic domination. This perspective seems to have alarmed the bureaucracy which, therefore, took such an insolent attitude towards the leaders of the Opposition.

We have repeatedly stated that, in the International, our Opposition is not bound up with the factional fight inside the CPSU. The capitulation of Tomsky, Rykoff, etc., therefore, does not in any way affect our position. Like the 'Right' Opposition in the CPSU our activities in the International have forced the official leadership to give up, though superficially, some of its ultra-left nonsense. But we are still far from the success that the Opposition in the CPSU has already attained.

Insofar as the internal affairs of the USSR are concerned, the Stalinist leadership could hide its blunders behind the great progress made, in spite of those blunders. But the report of the international activities would surely have called for severe condemnation had it been made to a Congress otherwise constituted. While the official leaders with foaming mouth denounce the danger of 'right opportunism', the grave danger that seriously threatens the international revolutionary proletarian movement is the stormy development of Fascism. And the putschist tactics of the Stalinist leadership has considerably contributed to the growth of this pest of counter-revolution. Fascism cannot be a powerful political movement until it finds support in the working class. Side by side with the coalition politics of Social-democracy, the futility of ultra-left Communist policy has helped Fascism in this respect. The XVI Congress of the CPSU that enthusiastically endorsed the report of Molotov and hailed Stalin as the great Leninist leader of the Communist International should have known that thousands of young workers today march in the streets of the great industrial cities of West Europe under the counter-revolutionary banner of Fascism. The Congress should have asked the leader of the International for a satisfactory explanation of this deplorable phenomenon. Then it would be evident that the present leadership of the International violates all the Leninist principles of Communist tactics.

Obviously, the Congress received the report on the activities of the Communist International as a mere formality without taking it seriously. For, otherwise it could not possibly be satisfied with the report. Speaking on the subject Manuilsky disclosed some facts which are a very damaging commentary on the present leadership of the CI indicating that there is something radically wrong with it. He stated that practically every section of the CI has lost members in recent years. The CP of England has declined from 12,000 to 3,500 (?). The French Party has lost 25 per cent of its membership and the CP of Czechoslovakia 50 per cent. If one looks more closely into the situation, it will be found that not a few of those workers who have deserted the CP in disgust or despair, today swell the ranks of Fascism.

Thus, on its own testimony the present leadership of the CI should be convicted as the greatest internal danger for the proletarian revolution. Still, those fighting against this danger are denounced as the 'main danger' to the Communist movement. Echoing the factional struggle inside the CPSU, the Party Congress endorsed the policy of fighting 'right opportunism' in the International. This is not unexpected. The much needed change in policy of the CI will not come from above. It must take place under the pressure of the masses. And the task of winning the masses for the CP devolves upon the Opposition. This is the basic lesson of the XVI Congress of the CPSU as far as the International is concerned.

Imperialist Swindle: Proposals of the Simon Commission*

The key theme of the first part of the Simon Commission Report which was published two weeks ago was that the Indian people are not ready for full self-government even within the British Empire, that it must remain under British leadership for an indefinite time.[1] The proposals for new reforms which became known recently are therefore quite in keeping with this theme. It is remarkable in this respect that the proposed reforms do not present at all any progress towards democratic government. Democratic freedom and imperialist rule are mutually exclusive. It cannot, therefore, surprise anyone that the proposals of the Simon Commission do not mean a step in the direction of democratic government. The Indian people are kept in direct suppression, and this is done under the pretext that they are incapable of handling their own affairs, and that they must be led step by step in this direction by a benevolent foreign ruler. What is, however, occurring at present in order to introduce this 'new rule' is an *anti-democratic regressive step in comparison with the system in force so far.*[2]

The cardinal point of the Simon proposals is, of course, that India must remain dependent upon England. The English Viceroy, who is responsible to the English Parliament via the Secretary of State, remains the guardian of autocratic power. This means a categorical rejection of even the demand made by the Indian bourgeoisie, namely, that of Dominion Status, that is full self-government within the British Empire. The English parliament, in which the Indian people are not represented, retains the prerogative to decide on the fate of those 320 million people. This alone is an affront to the most elementary principle of democracy—the right to self-determination. Even in the administration of the provinces in respect of which the Simon Commission's proposals are regarded as very liberal the supreme power remains in the hands of the Governors installed by the English King. The provincial Governors are not responsible to parliament and are invested with dictatorial powers which they can exercise as they see fit.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 3, No. 27, p. 426, 5 July 1930; signed article. SNR.

On the basis of this power-ratio the autonomy of the provinces is preserved. That means that the provinces are administered by ministers who are responsible to the legislative bodies, but the latter are not elected by the whole of the adult population but only by a numerically small upper class. The chief content of the proposed reforms consists in an extension of the voting rights by almost threefold. But what does this grand 'democratic' measure mean in reality? At present about 3 per cent of the population have voting rights. Now, under the 'new era of democratic freedom' 9 per cent of the population will have the right to vote. That is no more than a base device to bribe the landlords and the capitalists. In the first part of the Simon Report the illiteracy of the masses is named as the reason for preventing the introduction of universal suffrage. But even the *literate minority of 12 per cent does not have full voting rights*. This displays the brazenness of the proposals.

In return for these miserable concessions in the provincial administration a regressive step is taken in the central government. Until now the Central Legislative Assembly has been elected directly, albeit by a narrow circle of eligible voters. However, even this puppet parliament is abolished and replaced by a kind of senate which comprises representatives of the provincial parliaments. And this carefully selected body, made up of old politicians who stand outside the control of the people, will also possess no political power as the central government is not accountable to it. On the other hand, this federal senate which, on the basis of its composition, will be a strong bulwark of reaction, will be an effective weapon in the hands of the English Viceroy to restrict even more what little power the provincial ministers have been granted.

Moreover, the self-government of the provinces is in itself a measure *against the development of the revolution*. The current mass-uprising cannot be overcome effectively if the upper classes of the native population do not support the ruling order—that is, imperialist rule. As an indication of generosity even the 'administration of law and order' was granted to the ministers in the provinces who are responsible to the legislative bodies. What is the significance of this magnanimity? The upper classes of the *Indian bourgeoisie are placed in the service of the battle against the rising tide of the revolution*. The bloody suppression of future mass-movements will be carried out under the formal responsibility of the English Secretary of State for India and the control of the 'democratic' legislators. The upper class of the indigenous bourgeoisie is granted a sham power (in the provincial governments); it is, so to speak, armed to suppress the masses in the service of imperialist exploitation. In short: *this swindle of a 'new order' is nothing else than a great conspiracy against the overwhelming majority* *of the Indian people*. The aim is the formation of a united counter-revolutionary front against the oppressed masses.

The first part of the Simon Report explained repeatedly the worn-out arguments of imperialist propaganda, namely, that the racial, religious and linguistic differences within the Indian people are an obstacle to national self-government. The aim of the 'reforms' proposed in the second part of the Report, however, is to *split the Indian people into different groups in order to weaken the national movement*. The federal senate will not be a representation of the whole Indian people—not even the provincial parliaments are that and from them the federal senate is selected. It will be made up of representatives of different racial, religious, and linguistic groups. In this way that factor which is regarded as an obstacle to self-government will be artificially furthered. If the new system is retained for long India will break up into a number of vassal-states with different, contradictory interests which are held together by an imperialist over-rule.

Finally, the Simon Commission also proposes the *separation of the eastern province of Burma from India*. From the viewpoint of self-determination one cannot argue against such a separation, if it were done according to the demand of the population of Burma. As things are, a rather pernicious motive underlies the proposal of this separation, namely, the transformation of this rich province of Burma into a springboard for military operations against India in the impending war of independence.

Notes

[1] The Simon Commission was appointed in November 1927. It arrived in India in February 1928, but was boycotted throughout its stay in 1928–9. Its *Report* in two volumes was published in June 1930. *Report of the Indian Statutory* [Simon] *Commission*, Cmd. 3568 and 3569, 1930.

[2] Emphasis on words and sentences in the original article has been retained in translation through italicization.

SNR.

On the Situation in India*

The publication of the report of the Simon Commission has not had the success imperialism had hoped for. The recommended reforms in the report, instead of satisfying the upper bourgeoisie, have created a storm of indignation. Not only the National Congress but also the openly counter-revolutionary parties of the right wing, who represent the interests of the upper bourgeoisie, have refused to acknowledge the recommendations of the Simon Commission as corresponding to their demands. Two years ago the reforms proposed by the Simon Commission, or perhaps even less, might have satisfied not only the upper bourgeoisie but also the Swarajists. Now the mighty mass-movement encourages the bourgeoisie to stiffen its resistance in the hope of achieving a better deal.

One need not have any illusions about the attitude of the nationalist bourgeoisie. It wants to lead no revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Its programme is admittedly not the overthrow of imperialism but such a compromise with it which would further its class-interests. It is today already admitted everywhere that imperialist might in India cannot be maintained any longer on the basis of reforms recommended by the Simon Commission. While rattling its sabre all the time, imperialism keeps an eye, however, on how to escape from the *cul-de-sac* without losing its prestige. The Simon Report cannot simply be pushed aside. That would be a defeat which imperialism could hardly survive. Before the final declaration of the policy to be followed in the near future, the English Government recently published an official communiqué which stated that it was wrong to say that the Simon Report formed the only basis for constitutional reforms in India. Following this communiqué the English Government suggests that persons should come without prejudice to the forthcoming conference; other proposals will be welcome, which together with the Simon Report will undergo a careful examination. That is quite a clear hint to the Indian bourgeoisie. The latter is asked to abandon its negative attitude which it had adopted in opposition to the Simon Reform and to formulate its demands.

The Simon Report was indeed a trial balloon. Its purpose was to reconnoitre the situation. The investigation's result was that the situation was so serious that the representatives of imperialism advised a more liberal policy in India. It has been reported that the provincial governments regard the situation as so dangerous that they recommend an early official proclamation to disarm the movement against the Simon Report. On the other hand, British industrialists in India have openly joined their native colleagues in a petition to the Viceroy. They have given the advice that the definitive declaration on the granting of the dominion-constitution with certain specific restrictions be made without delay by the English Government to halt any undesirable developments of the situation.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 3, No. 29, pp. 455–6, 19 July 1930; unsigned article. SNR.

It is apparent that the development of matters in India neither depend on the wishes of imperialism nor on those of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The deciding forces are the actions of the Indian masses on the one hand and the inner contradictions of imperialism on the other. The second factor could very easily evoke a crisis in cabinet in England. A few days ago MacDonald hinted at this at a meeting of parliamentary representatives of the Labour Party. He demanded of the Party to hold itself in readiness for a general election in the autumn which would be fought on the matter of reform in India. If the Labour Party intended to take its stand on the grounds of the recommendations of the Simon Report it would certainly have the support of the two other bourgeois parties. The anticipation of a defeat on the Indian question, as indicated by MacDonald, means that the Labour Government has the intention of going further than the Simon Report. What is driving them in that direction? The interests of English capital invested and still to be invested in India for manufacturing enterprises. The English Government of India today is ruled rather by these interests than the commercial and banking capital as was the case in the past. This new force of imperialism has advised the English Viceroy not to bind himself to the Simon Report, which takes the viewpoint of the English trade with India and that of the banks which finance this trade. The Viceroy informed the English Government of this advice and the latter will act accordingly. In the same way that the policy of the Labour Government in relation to the rationalization of capitalist production at home is formally attacked by the old bourgeois parties, so its policy is also determined by the necessity to rationalize colonial exploitation. The Labour Government may be defeated in the matter of the Indian reform. But MacDonald seems to hope that he will return to office. He expects that the bourgeois voters not bound by traditions and the party programme within parliament will approve his policy.

Imperialism could not have been forced into this policy of greater concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie if the latter were not in possession of a dangerous weapon, namely a strong mass-movement. Imperialism knows that the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie is as little in favour of a revolution as it is itself. But the representatives of imperialism in India here are not blind. They realize how the sharp delineation of contrasts between the indigenous bourgeoisie and imperialism is contributing to the fact that the nationalist movement is developing in a revolutionary direction. Through its passionate outburst against the Simon Report the Indian bourgeoisie effected exactly what it would like to prevent. It helped in liberating the whole nationalist movement from reformist illusions, and as a result, in its radicalization. As the movement becomes more radical so the fight for some concessions on the part of the imperialist overlord is developing into a far-reaching national–democratic revolution. Thus it grows unavoidably beyond the leadership of the bourgeoisie which would like to employ this movement as a weapon in its dealings with imperialism. Actually the real leadership of the movement today is no longer in the hands of the known figures such as Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, etc. It is now exercised by the so-called 'war councils' which comprise mainly representatives of the urban petit-bourgeoisie. The war councils act on their own and force the bourgeois leaders to go further than they would do of their own accord.

So inexorable is the logic of events that the only way in which the government could prevent the bourgeois leaders of the National Congress from becoming tools of the revolution was to arrest them. The prophet of non-violence, Gandhi, was to be the most valuable ally of the established order. Subjectively he was that. But the movement of passive mass-resistance, which he led, went beyond his counter-revolutionary views and he became a tool for releasing the revolutionary mass-energy. The imperialist government was forced to place its greatest friend behind bars. Even more inexplicable appears the most recent arrest of Moti Lal Nehru. Even the most entrenched English newspapers in India deplore this step of the government. They write that old Nehru's arrest has destroyed the only bridge between the government and Congress, that the removal of Nehru has freed Congress from the last vestige of a moderating influence. Why did the government take such an apparently suicidal step? The spectacle of the salt-war did not satisfy the nationalist masses for long. They pushed for more effective action. Under their pressure the leading body of Congress sanctioned the introduction of a campaign for tax-refusal. All who know Nehru could not have the least doubt that he did not approve of this resolution. But the ordinary Congress-members did not know what inner convictions their leaders held. They took them at their word. The communists fight for the interests of the peasants with total honesty and determination.

Nevertheless, they are only noticed so far by a small vanguard. But if a Nehru talks of ceasing to pay taxes, without really desiring to do so in the least, then the word spreads like wildfire. Without realizing it he would do more for the revolution in this way than many an enthusiastic but deluded fighter for communism. The government recognized that this bulwark of moderation acted, against his will, in the interests of the revolution and put him behind bars.

Whilst imperialism hints that the Indian bourgeoisie may hope for more than the Simon Report permits, it concentrates however its efforts on smashing the revolutionary mass-movement.[1] If it is successful in this it would once more speak a different language with the representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie at the forthcoming conference and eventually they would perhaps not obtain more than the Simon Report offered. Nonetheless, a definitive declaration by the English government that the Simon Report is not the last word will cause a sharp turn-about in the movement. The resistance against imperialist absolutism led by the bourgeoisie will collapse. But the forces which have developed in the course of this resistance will still be there. The anti-imperialist fight then has to transcend the leadership of the nationalist bourgeoisie in order to emerge stronger than ever from the crisis.

But this view does not mean that the Indian Revolution is about to transcend the bourgeois–democratic limits and to enter the proletarian–socialist phase. The Indian Revolution will still develop as a bourgeois–democratic revolution. There have been other cases of bourgeois–democratic revolutions in history which occurred in spite of the bourgeoisie. The downfall of the Girondists was a condition for the victory of the French revolution. The collapse of the nationalist bourgeoisie will mark the beginning of the bourgeois–democratic revolution in India. Then the anti-imperialist fight will develop into a fight for a thoroughly national revolution. People who own large capitalist enterprises will join the landed aristocracy and the civil service in support of imperialist rule. But the mass of the population have to continue fighting for freedom. And how are these masses constituted socially? The overwhelming majority belongs to the class which has property, the peasant class. A revolution with such a social base will not halt at the accomplishment of its bourgeois–democratic tasks because in the given conditions these tasks can only be carried out under the hegemony of the proletariat. The question of the moment therefore is how can the proletariat exercise leadership in the struggle of the oppressed masses for national and democratic liberty.

The solution of these historical questions on which the future of the revolution depends has been delayed through serious organizational and tactical errors committed by the Communist International since the 6th World Congress. It is truly tragic that the proletariat which alone can be of use in helping the anti-imperialist fight to survive the imminent abandonment by the nationalist bourgeoisie remains isolated from the movement. The so-called war councils which are made up of the representatives of the oppressed middle classes do not comprise the proletariat although the latter ought to be the dominant factor in the situation. The proletariat will come out of its isolation if it provides the nationalist–revolutionary masses, who have been mobilized under the negative rally-calls of the bourgeoisie, with a positive programme of a national–democratic revolution.

The Communist International has not stated how the situation created by the publication of the Simon Report is to be treated. Obviously it is totally confused. It has not admitted its serious mistake. However, in a manifesto of the Communist Party of England published some weeks ago a change in the right direction is made. The manifesto declared in contrast to the theory posed over the last two years, that the Indian revolution is a bourgeois–democratic one, that its task is to establish a democratic dictatorship. This is the correct phrase in an abstract form. What is more important is to say how one might give this phrase a concrete form. The democratic dictatorship has to be realised in a particular form of government. This can only happen through election of a constituent assembly along the line(s) proposed by us.

Note

[1] During the second half of 1930, while the Civil Disobedience Campaign was on, seventy-five thousand persons were imprisoned, and the police resorted to numerous firings and lathi-charges, burning of houses and ejection of peasants from their villages, and various forms of torture and intimidation.

Sitaramayya, pp. 718–9; *also* Webb Miller, *I Found No Peace*, New York, 1936; *Condition of India: Report of the India League Delegation*, London, 1932. SNR.

Manifesto of the Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India*

The fight for National freedom, that is freedom for the overwhelming majority of the people from colonial slavery, is the task of the working class. In order to accomplish this task the working class must create its own organ of struggle . . .

The class that can fully subscribe to the maximum programme of communism at present constitutes a very small fraction of the Indian people, . . . Therefore the attempt to organize a Communist Party only with the maximum programme of Communism is bound to fail in India. In that way, there can possibly come into existence a small group carrying on Communist propaganda, but unable to influence the political struggle of the masses. In order to discharge its great mission . . . the rise of the Communist Party . . . is conditional upon the readjustment of communist tactics to the actual problems of the situation. In addition to its maximum programme, the Communist Party in the given situation must adopt a minimum programme, the programme of National Revolution. In doing so it will not in the least deviate from the basic principles of Communism. On the contrary, the struggle for the solution of immediate problem . . . will bring those principles within the realm of practical politics. An effective struggle against imperialist domination, victory in that struggle and the resulting abolition of conditions hindering free economic development of the country—all these will represent necessary stages actually towards Communism. The Communist Party, the Vanguard of the proletariat, must know how to lead the largest masses actually in the struggle for Communism even when these are not consciously fighting for that goal.

A party for leading the masses in a great revolutionary struggle cannot be organized by methods usual in India, a few individuals declaring themselves as such, and appointing an imposing list of office-bearers. The formulation of its programme is the first condition for the organization of the Communist Party. The main cause for the absence of the Communist Party in India, when conditions are favourable and it is urgently needed by the fighting masses, is that until now there has been much confusion about its programme. There cannot be any doubt about the maximum programme of the Communist Party. It has been clearly formulated internationally and is binding for the Communist Parties in all countries. The basic principles of Communist Programme are: 1. Overthrow of capitalism; 2. Abolition of private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange; 3. Overthrow of the propertied classes from political power. . . 4. Establishment of the Dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of the Soviet State for overwhelming the resistance of the defeated exploiting classes; 5. Reconstruction of the society on the basis of the common ownership of the means of production.

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* Extracts from the 'Manifesto of July 1930', as quoted by A. K. Hindi (Tayab Shaikh), *M. N. Roy: The Man Who Looked Ahead*, Ahmedabad, 1938, pp. 228–33. SNR.

'In India the immediate task of the working class is not the realization of the maximum programme of Communism. Imperialism being the result of capitalism, the struggle of the oppressed people for national freedom is essentially included in the programme of the Communist Party. But the struggle for national freedom involves classes other than proletariat that will not accept the maximum programme of Communism. Besides, . . . in India the forces of production are still far below that level of development in which the struggle for the realization of the maximum programme of Communism becomes an immediate necessity. The attainment of that level by the forces of production is conditional upon other revolutionary transformations of social relations. To execute these, therefore, becomes an integral part of the programme of the Communist Party of India.

'The workers getting class conscious and proletarianized intellectuals cannot be expected to join the Communist Party, if it is organized only with the maximum programme which appears to have little relation with the prevailing conditions of the country. They must be shown how the solution of the problems actually before them concerning the immediate demands of the toiling masses comes within the purview of the programme of the Communist Party, and that this does not propose only to be a propaganda body dreaming of remote abstractions but to deal effectively with the realities of the moment.

. . . The nature of national independence having been defined concretely, the next task of the CP is to show the way to practical assertion of the right of self-determination. This is the cardinal problem of the moment . . . The issue involved is the creation of the Democratic Organ of the struggle for power. The proletariat will establish hegemony over the struggle for national freedom by taking the initiative in the creation of that organ. While rejecting the discredited road of formal parliamentary democracy, the CP however, should not immediately take up the struggle for the establishment of the Soviet

Republic, as the organ of the Dictatorship of the proletariat. That would be running after a Utopia. The conditions in India are not yet mature for the Dictatorship of the proletariat. Under the given conditions the revolutionary State in India must be based upon all the oppressed and exploited classes whose interests are irreconcilably antagonistic to imperialism. Therefore the CP must agitate for the election of the Constituent Assembly, . . .

Let there be no illusion. The way inevitably leads to a revolutionary struggle out of which alone can a revolutionary state arise. Meanwhile all the popular forces of freedom should be mobilized and organized for the decisive struggle. To begin with, not only the workers and peasants, but all the oppressed democratic elements should be organized for the defence of their respective immediate interests . . . That is the only way to the conquest of national freedom. That is also the way to the emancipation of the toiling masses through a higher form of revolutionary struggle for the realization of the maximum programme of the Communist Party. The long and arduous road must be covered in stages. The guarantee for the ultimate triumph is the ability of the CP to become the effective leader of the struggle from the beginning. For playing this historic role the CP must be organized as a party of the masses.

Propaganda and organization are of great importance. The party cannot come down from the top. It must grow out of the masses. Only then will it be a living effective political factor, able to resist and strive against the fiercest repression that it is bound to face. The task of the pioneer group is not simply to formulate a programme, and demand that everyone should accept that programme as the first condition for joining the Communist Party. If only hundred per cent Communists are to be allowed to join the party, we will never have a Communist Party in India.

The task of the pioneer group is to get in touch with all concerned with the interests of the toiling masses and sympathetic to Communism. Our programme should be propagated among them. Local conferences should be organized for discussing the programme. Finally, delegates elected from those conferences will assemble in the National Inaugural Conference of the CP.

Thus formed as an independent organization, the Communist Party however should conduct its activities inside other mass organizations. Being the party of the proletariat, its base of operation is the trade unions, mills, factories, mines and such places of work. *But as the organ through which the proletariat will exercise* HEGEMONY *in the struggle for national freedom it must work inside the nationalist mass organizations—the National Congress, Youth Leagues, students' organizations, Volunteer Corps. The local Congress Committees particularly will* *provide a very fruitful field for the activities of the Communist Party*. Then the Communists should take initiative in the formation not only of peasants' unions but also in organizing other oppressed classes—the artisans, employees, students, petty intellectuals, small traders, and soldiers for the defence of their respective immediate interests. The Communists should agitate for the broadening of the SOCIAL BASIS OF THE LOCAL CONGRESS COMMITTEES.

Working in this way the Communist Party will remain in organic contact with all the forces of national revolution, involved in actual struggle, and thus be in a position to perform its function as the dominating factor of the entire situation. There is no other way to free the essentially revolutionary movement for national independence from the leadership of the bourgeoisie. There is no other way to Communism in India. In India, the way to Communism lies through the National Revolution.[1]

Note

[1] The Manifesto, written by Roy in Berlin in July 1930, was brought to India by Tayab Shaikh in August. I have not found the full text of the Manifesto, but have exactly reproduced here the excerpts as given by Shaikh in his biography of Roy. Italicization follows the Shaikh version. SNR.

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Problems of the Indian Revolution*

Despite the 'expulsion of the renegades and traitors of Roy's type' and the new ultra-left tactics of the phrase-mongers regarding the organizing of the Communist Party of India during the last 2 years, whilst the objective conditions were all very favourable, little progress was made. It is easy to make such irresponsible claims as, for instance, 'that since the expulsion of Roy' the setting up of the Indian section has progressed rapidly and has almost surpassed the 'given' objective. But it is difficult to forward any proof whatever for this claim. For more than a year no signs of any activity of the communists have been in evidence although the situation demanded more than ever the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. The purged Indian section gave its first sign of life when, recently, I published a manifesto for the organization of the Communist Party. From this time on, too, its activity consists in carrying on a campaign against me, not with reasonable arguments against the platform I have proposed for establishing the Communist Party but merely with invectives and strident ultra-left phrases. If the ability to shout abuse is the proof for being a revolutionary then we must collect our leaders in the fishmarket.

I was severely punished for the crime of having said that the Communist Party of India has to be a mass-party to be able to exert any real influence on the situation. According to the hyper-'Leninists' of India only *agents provocateurs* can believe that the Communist Party of India has to be a mass-party!!! Poor Lenin would turn in his grave if he heard of the amazing interpretation of his teachings. I am the last person who needs to be instructed on the fact that the Communist

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. IV. No. 4, 14 February 1931, pp. 37–8. The article, with the subtitle 'Tactics of the Partyliners in India and Tasks of the Indian Communists', was written as 'An Open Letter to the Members of the Revolutionary Workers' Movement of India', signed M. N. Roy, and dated Berlin, 15 December 1930. But Roy had already reached Karachi on 11 December 1930. Presumably the letter, originally written in English, was given a false date and place, and translated and published in *Gegen* in February in order to mislead the British and Indian Intelligence agents who were hot on Roy's heels. The Report of the Director of Intelligence Bureau, Government of India, mentioned this article in *Gegen den Strom* and commented that it gave 'a shrewd appreciation of things as they really were in India. The "official" Communists were as generals without an army; by faulty leadership they had thoroughly disorganized and demoralized such following as had been theirs'. Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, 1935; reprint 1976, p. 160. SNR.

Party in India can never act legally as long as imperialist rule has not been removed. For years I've had no battle against the legalistic illusions of many Indian comrades. But the illegal party too must be a mass-party, that is, it must be in close touch with the people, it must have their confidence, it must actively participate in every daily fight of the people. The Communist Party can only achieve this position in such manner that it leads the workers and peasants with immediate and partial demands, by creating legal mass organizations as a voice of such a fight. Those who find that the notion of a Communist mass-party is wrong only mask their sectarianism with radical phrases. We are persuaded that the illegal Communist Party is successful through such mass organizations as shop committees, general strike committees etc.! However, in very few of these numerous 'mass organizations' can one detect at present any activity whatever. They will be of no value as long as they exist on paper or in the imagination. On the other hand, the ultra-left tactics have destroyed mass organizations which grew up under communist leadership. The 'Red-Flag-Union' (Girni Kamgar Union) of Bombay which counted over 80,000 members last year, today hardly has a few thousand left. Other unions under communist leadership are nearly in the same position. The direction of the Trade Union Congress has been won by the communists only nominally. All of the great and important unions have remained under the direction of the reformists, loyalists and imperialists. They openly declare that it is their intention to exclude the 'extremists', and the communists have nothing to counter this plan except babbling about a general strike. The communists will no doubt lose their nominal position in the Trade Union Congress if they are unable to rebuild rapidly the 'Red-Flag-Union' in Bombay, to expand again their influence in the other important unions and to set up new mass organizations out of the yet unorganized workers. And they will be unable to do so if they do not abandon the ultra-left policy which they have followed during the last two years. They must speak to the workers in a language which the latter understand, about wages, conditions of work, freedom of organization, and other matters with which the workers are directly concerned. Before the confidence of the masses of workers has been won, before they have been mobilized in the course of a series of battles for immediate and partial demands under communist leadership, it is pure fantasy to talk of a general strike 'which will inevitably develop into an armed rebellion', to call on the workers to arm themselves, to play with the idea of an armed uprising and to proclaim the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government.

Comrades, don't let yourselves be misled by your imagination. Look straight at harsh reality. The communists are yet generals without an army worth mentioning. Thanks to the wrong strategy they have seriously disorganized and demoralized the following they once had. They are completely isolated from the general fight for national independence which comprises the masses of the oppressed, exploited and rebelling petty bourgeoisie. They speak of the proletarian hegemony in the national revolution, but they have shown themselves to be absolutely incapable of realizing this hegemony. The national petty bourgeoisie needs a revolutionary direction which, in the given situation, can only be exercised by the proletariat. But the petty bourgeoisie has little confidence in the communists, and even the proletariat still has to be brought under communist leadership. The communists have little contact with the growing rebellion of the peasants which is sabotaged by the Congress bosses. In order to take over the leadership of the peasants the communists must have a comprehensive programme of agrarian revolution which has to be carried out stage by stage. The hyper-'Leninists', however, prefer the road of least resistance. They have borrowed from the petty-bourgeois radicals the impracticable slogan of refusal to pay taxes. They agrarian problem in India is far too complex to be solved through the magic tricks of Gandhism.

It is easy to state that the national revolution will only be successful under the leadership of the proletariat. But the actual, not merely imagined, conquest of this leadership is more difficult. The essential condition for accomplishing this historical task is gaining the confidence and the adherence of the peasantry. But this vital matter has been overlooked in the scheme of the 'general strike' which is to develop inevitably into an armed rebellion and has been hatched by the hyper-'Leninists' in India. The new resolution of the executive committee of the Trade Union Congress calling for a general strike to set up a workers' and peasants' government completely ignores the crucial agrarian question. In the meantime the reformists, who are instructed by the liberal imperialists, are extending their hands in order to get the boiling peasant rebellion under their influence. Peasant organizations led by communists are as meagre and inactive, as are numerous other 'mass organizations' such as the Young Workers' League, general strike committees etc.

In this situation I thought it to be my revolutionary duty to publish a manifesto containing the platform on which under the given circumstances the Communist Party can alone be set up. I have not proposed to organize a 'Second Communist Party' which 'should be independent of the Communist International'. I have called for the foundation of the Communist Party of India (which today merely exists in name) that it might be a livelier, more active body able to accomplish the great tasks placed before it by history. I have proposed a programme of action which at this moment is of extreme importance as well as a strategy which suits the situation.

The Communist Party of India must be a section of the Communist International, but it cannot be erected as a mass organization if it does not reject the false line recommended by the current leadership of the Communist International. Such a rejection does not contradict the principle of centralized direction, it does not contravene revolutionary discipline. On the contrary, it will be a valuable contribution to the creation of a truly collective international leadership.

Nevertheless, it is exactly in this manifesto that the 'evidence' for my 'betrayal of communism' and 'the Indian working class' has been discovered. 'The reply' to my manifesto is not a reply. It is a vicious distortion. Comrades, I ask you to study the manifesto carefully. If you do that I will not need to dispute any longer with this quarrelsome 'reply'. May it suffice today to say: The line pursued since the 6th World Congress of the Communist International has completely failed. Hyper-radical phrases lead us nowhere. We need a programme for action. I have proposed such a one which you must examine. The programme can certainly be improved. Do hold conferences around the country to discuss the programme which, with the necessary corrections and supplements, is to be accepted eventually by the first party conference of the Communist Party of India. In order to prevent any intended subversive comments, I note here that the whole activity needs to be [carried out] illegally. But a party that wishes to lead a great revolution cannot remain a small clique. Even less, it cannot be fed by a few select people with badly digested notions.

Comrades! We are faced with a huge task. We have to work under extremely difficult conditions. Our forces are yet weak and scattered. We must close up our still thin ranks, discuss our differences in a friendly way in a communist and companionable spirit and work along the commonly established line on this basis. There is no other way in order to build an actively engaged, mighty communist party in India. There is no other way in order to strengthen the Communist International. There is no other way in order to assist the proletarian revolution.

Berlin, 15 December 1930.

Who Benefits from the Boycott-Movement?*

'The firm determination to boycott foreign cloth has brought good times for the Indian cotton industry. Whereas weaving-mills around the whole world have decreased their production by about 50%, our weaving-mills are working day and night. That is the immediate result of the boycott.' (Harjeeram Valjee, Vice-Pres., Bombay Piece-goods Merchants-Association, interview to the *Bombay Chronicle.*)

'If it had not been for this intensive Swadeshism (boycott movement) the cotton industry in general and the Bombay weaving-mills in particular would have been ruined.' (J. A. Wadia, interview to the *Bombay Chronicle.*)

'The boycott-movement is the anchor of Indian industry at a very critical moment of the depression. Almost all weaving-mills in Bombay would be forced to close down if it hadn't been for the boycott-movement. Now the Indian textile industry is well off and for the owners of the weaving-mills it is boom time.' (G. D. Birla, Press Interview.)

'If it were not for the Boycott and Swadeshi movement our economic situation would be worse. The Boycott and Swadeshi movement has given the Indian industry considerable prosperity. I am personally of the opinion that the boycott movement has fulfilled the purpose of an antidote to the depression.' (Shivapratap Joshi, President of the Marwari Chamber of Commerce, at the last annual meeting of the Chamber.)

These few quotes picked at random from among a lot of material on this matter give a clear reply to the question posed in the caption of this article. It is, however, not the economic but the political side of the question which is of significance to everyone who is concerned with national independence. If the boycott movement is rejected from the point of view of the masses, the average Congress member replies impatiently: 'Let us be free first, then we shall see that the interests of the masses are protected properly.' In response to this kind of argument we raise the extremely pertinent question: 'Will the boycott movement lead to national independence?' it is very easy to prove that is cannot, it will not do so.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 14 Feb. 1931, pp. 39–9. According to an introductory note from the editor, the article was taken from *The Masses*, 'an illegal publication of our Indian Comrades'. It must have been sent by Roy from India, but the particulars of issue number, date or page number of *The Masses* were not given in the *Gegen* version. SNR.

The notion behind the boycott movement is that it will exert pressure on the English government. If their pockets are threatened, British capitalists will demand a rapid solution of the Indian problem from their government so that normal economic relations can be restored. No one can believe that British capitalists would advise their government to grant India independence. The notion which lies behind the boycott movement thus leads obviously to a kind of compromise with our imperialist masters. Indeed, the boycott movement, together with many other causes, has already achieved the desired political effect, namely, the recently expressed readiness of the English liberal party to comply with the Indian demand for a 'responsible government' as it has been formulated by Sapru at the Round Table Conference. Thus the boycott has been effective insofar as it has forced the English liberal party to agree to certain concessions to India. Looked at in the light of reality one can hardly claim that the Congress leaders had actually boycotted the Round Table Conference. When it concentrated its entire energy on the boycott of English cloth Congress acted merely as a tool which strengthened the 'unrepresentative' Indian delegation to the London Conference. Even if we assume that Congress has played this not too glorious role unconsciously, we cannot, however, overlook the real 'consequence' of its actions.

We know that the great majority of the followers of Congress did not recognize this unholy alliance—so-to-speak, this division of labour in the bitter deal regarding a compromise with John Bull. In good faith they threw themselves into the boycott movement without assessing critically its objective purpose nor its probabilities. It is, therefore, our intention to expose the true character of the movement in the clear light of its 'achievements' so that the Congress people will seek the correct way to national independence.

Firstly, a few words about the economic side of the matter might be in order. The boycott movement rests on the basis that it wishes to create national prosperity by promoting native industry. The fundamental delusion of this theory lies in the fact that it allows for the possibility that India may achieve prosperity under imperialist rule. The boycott cannot liberate India, but it will raise India's prosperity! This means that political freedom must not be necessarily a prerequisite for economic prosperity! This theory, then, removes the basis from the battle for national independence. It supports not merely the position of the Indian loyalists and liberals; it even confirms the line of agrument of imperialism that India had progressed under the benevolent British protection, and that its future prosperity continues to require this protection.

'National wealth', so hotly desired by the representatives of this erroneous theory, *is the Wealth of a Few at the Expense, and to the most extreme Detriment, of the interests of the overwhelming Majority (over 90 per cent) of the Population.* Just now we are not examining the harmfulness of this theory from a broad social point of view but from the point of view of the immediate political significance. It means the abandonment of the fight for national independence. If India can prosper peacefully as a dominion of His British Majesty, why then waste so much of the people's energy on the search for political independence? This the followers of Congress should remember, and they should give up the general idea of achieving 'national wealth' through such empty gestures as the boycott of British goods.

The exponents of the theory of 'national wealth' will allege that the boycott also protects the immediate interests of the workers, because expansion of the indigenous industry provides work for them. They claim that the present boycott movement would have as a direct result the employment of all Bombay weavers in the cotton industry. If this claim is true, then it can easily be argued that the movement would serve the interests of a great number of exploited people in the whole country. But will the boycott really have this assumed favourable success even for the 150,000 Bombay textile mill-workers? We need not theorize in order to answer this question. Let the facts speak for themselves.

A strong depression rules in the cotton industry throughout the entire world. During the first half of 1930 *twenty-two* out of *eighty-two* cotton factories in Bombay *were closed.* The world is still in the grip of the depression but the Bombay factories have been saved by the boycott. At present almost all mills are working. The few small ones which are still closed down are more than compensated for by the numerous double-shifts. Thanks to the boycott movement *the Bombay cloth-industry is experiencing a boom period. Nevertheless, approximately 40,000 workers are unemployed.* There is little prospect for these to find work within the foreseeable future; for the labour-saving machines which were recently introduced to the Bombay factories reduce the work-force whilst increasing profitability of the industry. Neither have these unfortunate victims of capitalism any benefit from the 'national wealth', not even in the form of unemployment aid. Furthermore, the wages of the employed workers have been decreased constantly during the last years under the pretext of the economic depression. Now, when the boycott movement has aided the Bombay factories so much and admittedly a boom is in sight, the wages are still 30–40 *per cent lower than previously! Will Congress* demand of the manufacturers whom it has helped so magnanimously a considerable wage rise and a lowering of the working hours so that the dismissed unemployed have the opportunity to earn their living through honest work? However, the representatives of 'national wealth' will come and say: 'O no, that is impossible, because production costs must be kept low so that the Indian factories are able to compete with foreign goods.' Thus it is evident that the workers will have no part whatever, under any circumstances, in the 'national wealth'.

And now we shall examine what has been and what will be the effect of the boycott for the poor consumers throughout the entire country. When the boycott-movement was initiated by Congress as the main line of its activity, the Bombay cotton mills had large stockpiles. On the strength of the elementary law of supply and demand the price of cloth, in consonance with severe depression of agricultural prices, would have dropped if the boycott had not excluded artificially any foreign competition. If cloth-prices had dropped, the manufacturers would have had a smaller profit but the mass of poor consumers would have gained from it. As matters stand today, the poor peasants cannot satisfy the least of their clothing needs due to the large gap between industrial and agricultural prices. In December it was reported that the goods in stock had been reduced and even fallen below the level in normal times. This artificially created shortage will no doubt force up the price of cloth. Wages are low and the peasants are bankrupt because of the catastrophic situation of agricultural incomes. However, the manufacturers are to be assisted in keeping up artificially their price of cloth—this is the real 'achievement' of the boycott-movement. The mass of adherents of Congress who have no part in the textile industry ought to think on this matter before mimicking like parrots the slogan: 'Boycott British goods and you are free!'

The boycott is no weapon for those who wish to free themselves seriously from foreign rule. It is a lever in the hands of the few lucky ones who are seeking a compromise with British imperialism so that they can make a profit at the expense of the people. It is not, even in the least, of any benefit to any section of the working people.

For the Unity of Unions in India*

The direction of the 'Red-Flag' Union, in which currently after the collapse of the official Comintern line of policy the Oppositional Communists exert a guiding influence, has called for the unification of the Indian union movement on the following basis:[1]

I. The union is a tool of class struggle. Its fundamental task is the organization of the workers of individual crafts or industries for the defence and promotion of their interests. Therefore it cannot be the aim of any union under any circumstances to reconcile the interests of capital and the workers or to strive for friendly relations between the employer and the employee.

II. The immediate demands of all unions in India are:

1. The eight-hour day, including one rest-hour in all crafts and industries;
2. Minimum wages which ensure for all workers that they are not reduced to sub-marginal existence (for instance, nonthly 50 rupees for the skilled and 30 for the unskilled labourer);
3. Weekly payment of wages;
4. Equal pay for equal work, regardless of race or sex differences;
5. One month's leave at full pay;
6. Unemployment-, sickness-, age- and maternity-insurance at the cost of the employer;
7. Better living and working conditions for all workers. A rent for workers' quarters of not more than 10 per cent of the wage;
8. The establishment of independent workers' councils in factories, shops, mills, mines, ports, farms and all other places where collective work (labour) is offered, which must supervise that the working conditions are in line with the stipulated standard;
9. Abolition of child labour under 14 years of age;
10. Abolition of employment of women and children below ground in the mines;
11. Abolition of employment of women one month before and one month after their confinement;
12. Abolition of obtaining labour through any other system than the union system. Abolition of the system of combining labour-forces as is the practice on farms;

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 14 Feb. 1931, p. 39. SNR.

13. Abolition of money contributions (wage deductions) imposed by the employer (be it a private person or the government);
14. Abolition of the system of emergency funds under the control of the entrepreneur.

III. The entire union movement of the country should, under a central direction, carry out an energetic, continuous and well-coordinated movement for the putting into effect of these minimum demands. The method of self-appointed delegations who negotiate with the entrepreneurs or governmental offices is to be rejected as useless and harmful. The movement shall adopt the form of mass-meetings, demonstrations and strikes.

IV. Every time the workers of an individual craft or enterprise find themselves in conflict with the employers, the whole union movement must support them actively. Support should extend to declarations of class-solidarity, financial aid and sympathy-strikes.

V. In the case of each individual conflict with the employers no step shall be undertaken, no pact be concluded by the union leaders unless it has the consent of the workers which is expressed at a general meeting or a delegates' conference called together for this purpose.

VI. Every union shall hold a regular annual conference which undertakes a survey of the past activity and a new election of the executive. In the case of functionaries of a union disagreeing with this, the membership shall take the initiative of calling together a conference and of holding the functionary to account for his action. In such cases the national leadership of the entire union movement should intervene in favour of the masses and assist them in requiring the insubordinate functionary to resign.

VII. The National Congress of the union movement shall meet annually. The delegates to the Congress shall be elected at local conferences called together for this purpose by the total membership of the associated unions concerned.

VIII. The national executive of the union movement shall not make any agreements whatever nor work for the conclusion of such in negotiations with the employer or the government except with the knowledge and consent of the unions of workers in the relevant craft or industry. The conditions of any intended agreement should first be submitted to a conference (meeting) of delegates of the union for consideration and agreement.

IX. The Indian union movement shall not join the International Federation of Unions (the Amsterdam International) because the latter supports or is in agreement with the system of colonial exploitation.

X. The Indian union movement shall not send any delegates to the so-called International Working Conferences which take place under the influence of the League of Nations, for the workers of India have nothing to expect from these conferences which are held expressly for the purpose of reconciling the interests of the capitalists and the workers.

XI. No representative of the union movement shall accept a mandate in the central or provincial parliaments nor participate in any of the government committees.

XII. The unions of India must support and actively participate in the fight for national freedom from the standpoint of the working class. They believe that no compromise between the foreign and the Indian bourgeoisie (responsible government or dominion status) will change the situation of the workers essentially. The fundamental political demand of the Indian working class is: an end to imperialist rule, the overthrow of capitalism, and socialization of the means of production.

Note

[1] The inset paragraph constituted *Gegen den Strom*'s introductory note to this piece sent by Roy from his hideout in Bombay. On his arrival, Roy had quickly sized up the weakness of the Indian trade union movement, and set about training his followers in trade union work. The Girni Kamgar Union of Bombay, which had been a stronghold of the official Communists, had fallen into bad shape in 1929 in consequence of an ill-considered and poorly organized strike. S. V. Despande, Communist Secretary of the GKU, was expelled from the Union at a general meeting of the union held on 12 October 1930. Shortly after this the leadership of the GKU was taken over by the 'Royists' with the help of the President of the GKU, G. L. Kandalkar. In December 1930 Roy's followers gained control also of the Bombay Dock Workers'Union. They also worked to dislodge the official Communists from the GIP Railwaymen's Union. Roy advised them to seek the cooperation of moderate and nationalist trade unions which had separated from the Communist-dominated All India Trade Union Congress at Nagpur in December 1929. He wrote this document to provide the basis of unity.

Shortly before Roy's arrest, the Royists with the support of the nationalists defeated the Communists at the executive committee meeting of the AITUC at Calcutta whereupon the Communists broke away and formed a separate Red Trade Union Congress. At the open session of the AITUC on 7 July 1931 which elected the new office-bearers the offices of the President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer went to the Left nationalists, but two of the four vice-presidents were Roy-supporters and one of the new Secretaries was Roy's right hand man, Tayab Shaikh. Roy prepared a Platform of Unity which become the basis of unity efforts in the trade union movement for the next few years.

Labour Gazette (Bombay), 1931 (several issues); V. B. Karnik, *Indian Trade Unions*, Bombay, 1960; S. D. Punekar, *Trade Unionism in India*, Bombay, 1948. SNR.

Selections from

The Masses, Calcutta, January–June 1931
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Der Kampf un die Macht, *INKOPP*, Vol. II, Nos. 2–3
The Struggle for Power, *The Masses*, Vol. I, No. 3
Die Konstituierende Versammlung; *INKOPP*, Vol. II, Nos. 4–5
The Constituent Assembly, *The Masses*, Vol. I, No. 4
Verraeterischer Imperialismus, *INKOPP*, Vol. II, No. 6
Traitorous Imperialism, *The Masses*, Vol. I, No. 6

Introductory editorial note

A one of the leaders of the Communist International, M. N. Roy used to publish his monthly journal *The Masses of India* from 1925 to 1928. When he returned surreptitiously to India in December 1930 one of the first activities he took up was to revive the journal under the name *The Masses*. This is mentioned in the Report of the Director of the Intelligence Bureau (Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, 1935, reprint 1976, p. 159) which also gives details of his activities in Bombay, Karachi, United Provinces and the Punjab.

I have not succeeded in procuring a set of the Indian edition of *The Masses*, but going through my photocopies of *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistichen Opposition* (INKOPP) which was founded in 1930 and edited jointly by M. N. Roy and August Thalheimer, I came across three sets of contributions which were described as taken from *The Masses*, India. The editorial notes prefacing the articles provided the information that *The Masses* was 'a fortnightly published on roneoed paper' by 'our small group in India', and later that it was the 'organ of the Committee for the Organization of the Revolutionary Party of the Working Class of India', Roy lived and worked underground under different assumed names and disguises from the date of his arrival in Karachi (11 Dec. 1930) till his arrest in Bombay on 21 July 1931. During this brief period of seven months it seems that six issues of *The Masses* came out from Calcutta. The three pieces from *The Masses* included here have been retranslated from the German version in *INKOPP*, which also ceased publication after Roy's arrest in July 1931. That the Indian edition of *The Masses* was published from Calcutta was mentioned by Tayab Shaikh in his letter of 2 June (?1932) to the Bombay 'Royists'. M. N. Roy Archives, Nehru Memorial Museum, New Delhi. SNR.

The Struggle for Power*

What now? This question must be with everyone who is serious about national liberty, who does not allow himself to be deceived and does not wish to deceive others.

There is general rejoicing that the Congress leaders have been released.[1] But the fact of their release is of little significance if they do not give the struggle for freedom a new impetus, if their freedom does not open a fresh period of the struggle.

The Congress leaders were not released unconditionally but expressly to confer on the result of the London Conference. Why do they care about the result of a conference which they boycotted, explaining that nothing good could come out of it? There is nothing to be conferred about because nothing has been offered. As far as the masses of the people are concerned, the question of acceptance or rejection of proposed reforms does not exist at all. They have not been offered the least which they could accept or reject. Therefore, they cannot adopt the opportunist standpoint: Take what is given to you and then fight for more.

Even if one assumes that in the course of further negotiations the 'assurances, guarantees and reservations' for the imperialist rulers will be amended, the situation will not be changed basically. The main power will remain in the hands of the English rulers, and at best the so-called 'basis for independence' may perhaps be granted. But even then the 'basis' will not be a real basis but some dressed up phantom.

People who believe that one can achieve genuine liberty from the rulers through negotiations live in a fool's paradise. Imperialism will never let go of military and financial control, neither through negotiations nor under pressure as long as the latter does not break its neck. And this control holds the Indian masses in chains of slavery and will only disappear when imperialism itself disappears and is uprooted. Imperialism has today all positions of power in its hand. There is no prospect that it will cede voluntarily even one inch of ground. It must be driven from its position of power by force. Only then will the Indian masses be free. Only then, too, the 'basis for independence' will be ensured. Only then will it be possible to erect Swaraj.

Imperialism is merciless on the matter of financial control because through it the booty is assured. The imperialist domination of India provides the imperialists with a booty of approximately 250 million rupees annually. These are raised by robbing the working masses of a large part of their produce. The burden amounts to approximately 40 to 50 rupees annually per employable adult who works in production. This burden forces the Indian masses into a condition of lowest poverty. The payment of this booty denotes the 'foreign obligations' of India. Any lowering of this tribute will be an encroachment on imperialist domination. Therefore, to place the 'foreign obligations' in jeopardy will not be tolerated. In order to ensure payment of these 'foreign obligations' imperialist control is required; and for this purpose, military power is necessary. Therefore, any examination of the 'Assurances, Guarantees and Reservations' can only be a deception. Could it be that the Congress leaders really were to fall for it?

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* Translated from *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition*, Vol. 2, Nos. 2–3, pp. 32–5; originally published in *The Masses*, Calcutta, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1931 (probably Feb./March). SNR.

The result of the London conference is a compromise between the English rulers and the Indian upper classes. The Indian delegates at the London conference represented the upper classes—the princes, estate owners, big capitalists and high officials who make up a minute fraction (hardly 2 per cent.) of the population.[2] The actual burden of imperialist rule does not touch these classes. They are very generous in accepting the 'foreign obligations'. They do not have to pay. In addition, the Indian masses have their internal 'obligations' which are no more justified than the foreign ones. Either both 'obligations' have to be maintained or both have to be abolished. In return for the assurance that the 'foreign obligations' are acknowledged—the masses, of course, will foot the bill—the Indian upper classes are granted a few concessions by the English overlords. The concern of the Indian upper classes is that they have adequate scope and power to exploit the Indian masses. The proposed reforms will reduce their anxiety in this regard, at least in part. The fact of 'financial control' will prevent them from going too far in this and from lessening the imperialists' share. The masses cannot pay if they have nothing with which to pay. Imperialism lays principal claims on the exploitation of the Indian masses. With regard to this, the Indian upper classes may further clip the helpless victim. The proposed reforms secure them this ardently desired right. Therefore they are satisfied. They celebrate the reforms as the 'basis for independence'. From their standpoint that is what they are. The 'equal partnership' within the empire means partnership in the plunder. What they are offered, however, is not 'equal partnership' but junior partner's rights. They accept it with an opportunist's satisfaction—take as much as you can get and then see how you can get more.

But there is no compromise between the imperialist rulers and the

Indian masses. Imperialism stands for unrestricted exploitation of the Indian masses. True national freedom, therefore, has as prerequisite the overthrow of imperialist reign.

Under these circumstances there can be no doubt about the attitude of those who are working for the welfare of the great majority of the Indian people, who seriously, honestly and determinedly strive for true national liberty. They cannot be a party to the compromise between the English rulers and the Indian upper classes. It is their task to expose the proposed reforms as a platform of a counter-revolutionary united front of all those who are growing fat on plundering the Indian masses. The proposal denotes the establishment of a robber's union.

There is nothing to be discussed as far as the greater majority of the people is concerned. There is not even anything to be boycotted; for nothing in the least is offered to the Indian masses.

The task of the serious freedom-fighter is therefore clear, namely, to continue the struggle with increased energy, with more effective weapons, with clearer revolutionary insight.

Do not foster any illusions! Without a fight there is no liberty, and a fight which is to lead to victory must go beyond the stage of negotiations for possible compromises. It must be an open struggle—for the conquest of power.

The 'foreign obligations' cast the Indian masses into chains of slavery and force them into even greater abysmal depths of pauperization. Freedom from these enforced 'obligations' is the very first prerequisite for the mere 'basis of independence'. But the people must have the strength to break these chains. Therefore, the immediate task is to commence the struggle for power.

A few words about the so-called 'independent authority' which is to rule on the matter of the Indian 'foreign obligations'. In this important matter there can be no neutrality. One is either for or against imperialism. And imperialism will never leave this vital matter of its existence to any authority which does not act in accordance with its wishes. Therefore, it would be base self-denial by the Indian people to busy themselves with the search for a deceptive 'independent authority'. The rich upper classes would deliver the Indian people to the charitable mercy of such a modern Solomon who would determine the compromise with imperialism. But the masses will not be a party, as helpless pawns, in such a game.

The concrete answer to the question—what now?—has been laid down clearly in our manifesto. It reads in brief: Take up the fight for power! *Find in which way to assert the right to self-determination effectively! Prepare for revolution with the aim of establishing the power as a people's organ*!

Mobilize the masses for a gigantic battle to deliver the decisive blow to break the chains of slavery. In our manifesto we have shown how this mobilization should proceed and have put up an action-programme. Stir up the oppressed and exploited masses—the workers, peasants, craftsmen, small businessmen, clerks, impoverished intellectuals, students, etc.—to form local committees for the election of the Constituent Assembly, at the given point in time. Propagate the programme of a national revolution as written down in our manifesto.

No compromise, no capitulation, no deception! Demand from your leaders that they commence an open battle. The masses must gain political power as the first prerequisite for national liberty. *Forward in the struggle for power*—that is the slogan of this moment.[3]

Notes

[1] On 25 January 1931 the Governor-General issued a statement which declared that Gandhi and other imprisoned members of the Congress Working Committee would be released forthwith to allow them to discuss freely among themselves what might be the terms and mode of peaceful settlement between them and the government. The 'interim' members of the Congress Working Committee who had not been arrested had met on 21 January at Allahabad and passed a 'privileged resolution' calling upon 'the country to observe the anniversary of the Independence Day which falls on 26 January', but this resolution was not published. On his release before midnight on 26 January Gandhi issued a statement expressing his willingness 'to study the whole situation from every point of view'. B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress (1885–1935)*, 1935, pp. 717–23.

[2] The first session of the Round Table Conference was held in London from 12 November 1930 to 19 January 1931. The Congress did not participate in it. The participants comprised 16 representatives of the three British Political Parties, 16 delegates from the Indian Native States and 57 persons from British India. They included the Princes of Patiala, Bikaner, Alwar and Bhopal, and prominent public figures like Tej Bahadur Sapru, Srinivasa Sastri, B. R. Ambedkar, Mohammed Shafi and C. Y. Chintamoni.

Subsequently, after reaching an agreement with the Government of India, Gandhi participated in the second session of the Round Table Conference (7 Sept. to 1 Dec. 1931).

Sitaramayya, op. cit; Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Datta, *An Advanced History of India*, 1963, pp. 920–21.

[3] The article was followed (pp. 35–40 in *INKOPP*) by (a) the report of a speech by G. L. Kandalkar at a public meeting of trade unions at Bombay held on Thursday 12 February 1921; (b) A 'Freedom Letter'; (c) a Statement criticizing 'an unauthorized manifesto' issued by the Secretary of the propaganda Committee of the Red Flag Union of Bombay.

SNR.

The Constituent Assembly*

From India: Excerpts from *The Masses* of 7 March 1931.

The continuing peace-negotiations are nearing an end. A very considerable part of the members of Congress were discontented with the policy of the leaders when they entered upon negotiations with the government. The boiling discontent was suppressed shortly before its eruption into an open revolt. Blind faith in personalities formed the obstacle. There was a forlorn hope that the negotiations would break down and the movement would proceed. This hope is now gone.

Among some social classes the illusion is, of course, uneradicable. The conclusion of the armistice is celebrated as a victory by Congress. Triumphantly they declare that this 'change of mind' had come about under the pressure of public opinion. That may be some consolation to those who believe in the theory of a 'change of mind', who believe in the possibility that a leopard changes his spots. For the rest, it is a fact that the armistice is concluded on the basis of the capitulation of Congress. The demands which Mr Gandhi posed at the beginning of the negotiations were slowly moderated until they were practically abandoned. The readiness to break off the civil disobedience campaign is a base capitulation.[1] It is no concession on the part of the government to release the non-violent prisoners on this basis.

In a word, the armistice has come about on the basis of the agreement of the Congress leaders to discuss the compromise conditions proposed by imperialism. The Congress leaders will participate in the conference with imperialism, a conference which they themselves have boycotted. This capitulation does not merely signify a disregard of the Lahore resolution as is believed by the masses of the discontented. On the contrary, the Lahore resolution left the way open for eventual capitulation. One has to remember that the Lahore resolution boycotted the Round-Table Conference, arguing that 'in the given circumstances nothing could be gained from participating at the conference'. The refusal to participate at the conference was not an unconditional one. Apparently the Congress leaders believe that the position has now changed. In other words, they discovered the

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* Translated from *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition*, Vol. 2, Nos. 4–5, pp. 23–32; originally published in *The Masses*, Calcutta, No. 4, 7 March 1931. SNR.

'substance of independence' in the reforms proposed by the Round Table Conference. Of course, no-one is quite content with the proposed reforms except for the travelling knights who brought home the so-called 'Proposal of Freedom'.[2] During the next stage of the conference one will make an effort to snatch more concessions from the reluctant hands of imperialism. There are no grounds for optimism. After capitulating, one cannot dictate conditions. Whatever the attitude of the Congress delegates at the new Round Table Conference may be, their readiness to participate denotes the recognition of the right of the English Parliament to determine India's future. That is a denial of the right to self-determination.

Congress, through the vagueness of its goal and the confusion over the methods for its realization, has been driven into this embarrassing situation. As one did not firmly outline independence, it is open to all possible interpretations. And capitulation before the self-presumptuous authority of the English Parliament is inevitable as long as one has no other authority in view.

The best that can possibly be achieved via the path chosen by the Congress leaders is Dominion Status. About this point, too, one need not indulge in any illusions. Imperialism will grant not more than the absolute minimum. If Congress is not content with this magnanimous gift by imperialism, then it must choose the road of the revolutionary power-struggle. After having finally abandoned this path, it has to accept everything imperialism deigns to concede. And no matter how generous the concessions to the upper class may happen to be, imperialism will never give up even the least little part of its plunder which it has squeezed out of the Indian masses.

Thus the old question about the goal of the nationalist movement arises again. Is it a government of our own within the British Empire, or is it total independence without any foreign controls, whether open or hidden ones? This question has actually never been answered clearly. The time has come when this must be done.

Of course, the leaders will not appear before the Congress in Karachi and request permission for their capitulation-policy; they will appear in the deceptive robes of victors. They will claim that Congress has agreed to participate at the conference with imperialism on the basis of their conditions, that their hands are free and that they will always have the right to reject the new constitution if it does not guarantee the 'substance of independence'. Furthermore, they will attempt to raise a new illusion through pseudo-radical speeches on the right of secession. They will claim that an India with a government of its own will be as good as independent because in this case it will reserve the right to leave the British Empire at any desired time. Deceived by this dubious right, Congress will be content with

Dominion Status, if not in so many words then through silent acquiescence.

In this situation the duty of the revolutionary elements is evident. They must bring forward concrete questions. They must define clearly independence in order to show that it can never be realized through an agreement with foreign imperialism. They must pose the most important question of [where] power [lies].

Against the policies of compromise and capitulation a clear programme of revolutionry action must be mounted. The fight for liberty must be continued. It must be raised on to a higher level in order to be directed with a clearly defined programme and effective methods under a determined leadership. It must come out of the erroneous circle of negation; it must throw off the illusion of being provident (which denotes, in effect, capitulation in the face of the enemy), and it must move into the last and decisive phase of the fight for power.

In order to prevent capitulation being celebrated as a victory, the gilded chain being glorified as a Charter of Freedom, the minimum conditions for national freedom must be unambiguously stated. These conditions are: Freedom for the great majority of the people from imperialist exploitation; concrete measures for the improvement of the position of the oppressed and exploited masses; and adequate political power for these classes to defend their rights. It is clear that these conditions will never be achieved with the permission of imperialism. Therefore, imperialism must be overthrown and political power be grasped by the masses.

As soon as the need for the conquest of power has been acknowledged, it is a matter of forging the weapons for this. The oppressed and exploited masses must create their own organs to challenge the existing power-regime. In other words, the foundation-stone has to be laid for a free national state. The great majority of the Indian people whose interests are not advanced in the slightest by a compromise with imperialism, must create revolutionary agencies to enforce their demands. In such an organization the oppressed and exploited classes must form joint committees to lead the fight for the conquest of power. At a given time these local revolutionary committees will have before them the rally-call to dispatch delegates to a sovereign, national body in order to establish the free national state and the fundamental laws in correspondence with the interests of their members. The call for the election of a *National Constituent Assembly* will be the signal for the revolution out of which alone a free national state can emerge. The organ which emerges from the revolution and comprises the masses is the first prerequisite for true national liberty.

The People's Organ for the conquest of power cannot comprise the whole population because the upper classes are opposed to a revolutionary fight. They wish to conclude a compromise with imperialism for the purpose of sharing power with it. The Congress leaders by admitting that they are party to such a compromise, come into opposition with the fight of the masses for the conquest of power. This fact must be clearly recognized by the masses who are striving for national freedom. Under these circumstances, the arguments which are advanced by some groups of Congress, that the self-same Congress be the organ for the conquest of power, lose all force. Even if Congress were to adopt the programme of national revolution and would consequently conduct the fight for the conquest of power, it could not itself be the organ of power. In that case it would be the revolutionary party which leads the masses in the struggle for power as power must be gained not by one party but by the oppressed masses. The foundation of revolutionary committees and, at a given time, the election of a *National Constituent Assembly*, are the stages in the fight for the conquest of power by the oppressed and exploited masses. Not to comprehend this means lack of a revolutionary determination. For there is no other way to national freedom, if this include the overthrow of imperialist power as a prerequisite.

Peace? No Fight![3]

The revolutionary elements among the adherents of Congress can no longer remain quiet. The peace-negotiations are over, and there can no longer be any doubt about the path which the Congress leaders have chosen. This path will never lead to independence but to a compromise with imperialism.[4] In a few days thousands of ardent fighters will emerge from the prisons. They entered in the belief that their imprisonment would bring the Indian people closer to freedom. Won't they be angered when they discover that they have suffered in vain? Or will they continue to be deceived by blind faith and inappropriate loyalty?

As far as the masses are concerned, there can be no peace. Inhuman exploitation has driven them to rebellion. Congress should not forget that imperialism desires a compromise with the Indian upper classes because this rebellion has frightened it. Congress was a mighty factor which the government could not pass over as long as it acted as the agent through which the rebellion of the masses dominated the situation. It was not the public opinion of non-violence which tied the hands of the government. Neither was it Gandhi's persuasive skill which convinced the Viceroy. The deciding factor in the whole situation is the growing revolutionary crisis which defies all efforts for a peaceful solution. By way of the peace-declaration Congress is disengaging itself from the source of its own strength. It is cutting down the branch on which it has been sitting. Congress may be anxiously working to generate a peaceful atmosphere in order to conduct further negotiations for the eventual compromise. But the mass of workers cannot share this longing for peace. For them there can be no peace. They are carrying on a life-or-death-fight. They had no choice. They were driven into it. The peasantry can simply no longer tolerate the burden of rents, taxes and all the innumerable compulsory payments. They cannot even sell their produce to meet the cost of its production. In consequence, they cannot even buy their most minimal vital needs. They have to rebel or die from starvation. Congress advises them to starve. That follows from this peace. Hundreds of thousands of workers have lost their jobs. What are they to do? There can be no peace when hungry people are lying in the streets.

The followers of Congress must choose between an open state of war involving the majority of the people on the one hand, and the desire for peace of the leaders on the other. The interests of the masses demand the rejection of the peace-policy. This policy must be opposed by the demand for an unrelenting fight. The programme of such a fight has been presented to the masses of Congress in our manifesto. The most progressive elements of the Congress-masses have put up an opposition-platform to the policy of the leaders. They have formed an *Action-Committee for Independence*. All serious and determined freedom-fighters must join this Committee. They must tell the leaders in clear terms that the masses do not approve of their policy.

The workers and peasants are ready to fight. They have no other choice. The middle-class followers of Congress must decide to rid themselves of their illusions about the gods with clay feet and join the fight. With or without them the struggle will continue. For the mass of people there can be no peace until imperialism has been totally overthrown, its power of exploitation has been wholly eliminated, and the masses have gained power. The platform of the revolutionary union of the oppressed and exploited people has been established. Let us hold fast to it and fight until we have gained true liberty.

Demand the Right to Self-Determination!

Foreward to the Election of the Constituent Assembly!

Manifesto[5] Supplement to *The Masses*

Comrades! Fighters for National Freedom!

The Round Table Conference has ended. The result is no surprise to those who did not place any false hopes in it.[6] Those who seriously strive for national freedom and clearly understand what that means, could never expect anything from a conference with the imperialist rulers of our country. Even full Dominion-Status cannot be achieved through a simple demand. We, the vanguard of the working class, have always said so.

The constitution which is now to be established on the basis of the principles agreed to by the conference will not be a dominion-constitution. The Indian delegates at the conference and those whom they represented did not even demand the immediate introduction of the dominion-status. From the start they agreed to 'Assurances and Reservations during the Transitional period'. Indeed, as things are, they have achieved more than they expected. They would even have agreed to the autonomy of the provinces with reluctance. English imperialism was forced to make greater concessions than it wanted to make.

The maturing of the revolutionary crisis in India, as shown by the increasing wave of peasant-uprisings, had tied the hands of imperialism. In view of the growing threat of a revolution, imperialism needs the widest support of the Indian upper classes. No price was too high for that, although under the given circumstances, imperialism made the best possible deal.

The net-result of the conference is a *counter-revolutionary unity-front of foreign imperialism with the Indian upper classes in order to quash the fight for freedom by the Indian masses*.

The administration of 'law and order' will be transferred to Indian ministers who are responsible to the legislature. What does that mean? It means that imperialism trusts the Indian upper classes in whose hands the legislature rests, to fulfil the important task of suppressing the hated and feared revolutionary mass-movement. It means that the Indian bourgeoisie is being armed in order to shoot down the workers and peasants who rebel against the intolerable conditions of oppression and exploitation. Without doubt they will execute their newly gained power with sufficient eagerness because through such meritorious deeds they will prove their aptitude for further measures of self-government within the British Empire.

Why did the representatives of the Indian upper classes accept so willingly the 'Assurances and Reservations'? Because they cannot do without English protection in view of the maturing revolution. But they are not given that gratis. The guarantee against the danger of revolution can only be gained on the basis of conditions which imperialism dictates. 'The assurance for the fulfilment of the Indian guarantees and obligations' will thus, in the last instance, only disadvantage the masses. The purpose of imperialist control over Indian finance is to leave at least the imperialist booty untouched. As this booty is the result of the exploitation of the producing masses, the imperialist control of Indian finance means that the workers and peasants are just as ever to be further oppressed and exploited under the reformed regime. They are forced to rebel against continuous oppression and exploitation. *For that the Indian upper classes have been assured of the privilege to function as the executioners of foreign imperialism.*

Nowhere, then, does any prospect of national freedom exist. Those who desire it seriously and at any cost, must continue to fight for it. In the situation newly created through the resolution of Congress (the pact between English imperialism and the Indian upper classes) the fight has to be conducted with new weapons. The fighters for freedom must extricate themselves from the crippling grip of negativism. They must find the way to demand positively the right to self-determination and to create the means through which to achieve this effectively.

Now, it has become sufficiently clear that *complete national independence is not the demand of the entire Indian people. The upper classes do not wish to lose the protection of English imperialism*, and do not mind how dearly the masses have to pay for this. *Complete national independence means the promotion of the oppressed and exploited masses whose interests are forever irreconcilable with those of imperialist rule* in whatever form this may be dressed up. They do not need imperialist protection *because they have nothing to lose but their chains*. Therefore, the struggle to mobilize the oppressed and exploited masses, who are ninety per cent of the population, is at the same time the real struggle for self-determination. That is the immediate task of the vanguard of fighters for national freedom.

The question facing those who seriously fight for complete independence is the acceptance or rejection of the proposed reforms. For the offered reforms do not touch the oppressed and exploited masses at all. Only the Indian upper classes benefit from them. The question facing the serious freedom-fighters is this: *How can the fight be raised to a higher stage: How can the fight for the conquest of power through the masses be commenced?*

The prerequisite for the conquest of power through the masses is the creation of an organ which embodies the revolutionary democratic might. The *autocratic might of foreign imperialism* which has now been strengthened through an alliance with the Indian upper classes, *must be confronted and challenged by the organized will of the revolutionary masses*. That will come about through the election of a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY by the oppressed and exploited masses.

Only such a sovereign authority will have the right to create the organic law of the free national state which, clearly and definitively, is dedicated to the protection and promotion of the interests of the masses.

The constitution of an emerging revolutionary state is not a plan for the building of a government. It must first of all contain a declaration of the rights which the citizens will enjoy under the new order. Further, the fundamental laws of the new social order, which is to be created by the revolutionary state, must be written down in it.

Therefore, at the commencement of the campaign for the achievement of revolutionary democratic power the fundamental principle of the organic law of the free national state must be indicated. This principle is that the interests of the working masses demand urgently a radical improvement in the prevailing social circumstances. The economic system and the social system, which oppress and exploit the masses, go hand in hand with the political system of foreign rule.

The fundamental law of the free national state which the Constituent Assembly has to create after the overthrow of the current regime will be:

1. to erect the democratic dictatorship of the oppressed and exploited classes, and to divest the exploiting classes of all rights and all power;
2. to abolish the Native States and manorial estates;
3. to abolish private ownership of land as a means of production;
4. to nationalize traffic-routes, mineral resources and large industry;
5. to disown all previously imposed foreign obligations;
6. to reduce land-rates to 15 per cent of the net-income of the cultivator;
7. to abolish all indirect taxes;
8. to cancel the indebtedness of the impoverished peasantry;
9. to protect the small producer against usury and trade-monopolies;
10. to guarantee the workers minimum wages, healthy living-and work-conditions, comfortable residential circumstances and insurance against unemployment, sickness, etc., so that they receive an increasing share of their work-product;

11. to introduce free and compulsory education for all children under 14 years of age;
12. to grant equal rights to women;
13. to introduce complete freedom of the press, speech, association and for meetings of the working masses;
14. to protect minorities and
15. to guarantee religious freedom and attendance of religious services.

The struggle for the conquest of power should commence immediately with a campaign by *establishig throughout the country Committees for the election of the Constituent Assembly*. The Constituent Assembly should comprise delegates of organizations of the various oppressed and exploited classes, i.e., of workers, peasants, craftsmen, small businessmen, clerks, impoverished students and possibly soldiers. Organizations of these oppressed classes should be called into being during the course of the campaign for the pursuit of their respective immediate part-demands (minimum wages, 8-hour-day, unemployment assistance, reduction of land rates and taxes, liquidation of the indebtedness of the impoverished peasants, control of usurers, reduction of taxes, freedom of the press, speech and meeting, etc.).

When the preparatory campaign of agitation and organization has been carried out, then the delegates to the Constituent Assembly shall be elected throughout the country as the embodiment of the revolutionary democratic power.

This is the only way to gain power. That is the only way to national liberty.

Revolutionary freedom-fighters! Commence the campaign with the rally-cries: Down with Imperialism! Down with the counter-revolutionary unity-front! Forward for the creation of the Constituent Assembly! Erect the revolutionary battlefront of the masses! Forward, to the conquest of power!

12 February 1931.

The provisional Committee for the Organization of the Revolutionary Party of the Indian WORKING-CLASS.

Comrades, read the *Masses* and pass it on! It is the organizer of the struggle for power. Readers of the *Masses*! Organize Yourselves in groups.

A Political Declaration

Guidelines for the masses of Congress-followers in the fight for freedom[7]

It is extremely deplorable that the Congress leaders have consented to confer about the reforms proposed by the Round Table Conference. All the speeches and peace-negotiations merely confuse the situation and push aside the main question. The Round Table Conference has drafted a compromise-scheme with imperialism on the basis of minimum concessions for the upper classes of the Indian people. The consent to consider this scheme betrays the readiness for a compromise with imperialism. That is a grave violation of the principle of national liberty. No compromise with foreign imperialism, no matter how great the gained reforms might be, can ever bring about independence, at least not for the masses of the people.

The foreign rulers of our country will never voluntarily cede their position of power and prerogatives. Neither can they be persuaded to do so. Consequently, any compromise, no matter how reasonable its conditions appear at first sight, can only mean capitulation in reality.

Not an element of freedom

From the point of view of the masses not even the most basic element of freedom can be seen in the proposed reforms. The masses of the Indian people pine away in the greatest depths of abysmal poverty. The peasantry is bankrupt, pauperized, sunk into inescapable indebtedness. The workers in towns and country live in indescribable misery; throughout their life they are faced by starvation. The position is not better among the middle-classes. The only criterion for national freedom is a concrete improvement in the conditions of existence of the majority of the people. The proposed reforms will not rid the peasantry from the crushing burden of imperialist tribute, feudal payments and the usurious debts; they do not guarantee the workers an existence worthy of human beings; they do not grant such political minimum rights which will enable the masses to defend and further their interests; in short, they will not change in the least the position of the majority of the people.

For the great majority of the people nothing at all is offered; therefore, they cannot share the opportunist standpoint: Take what is offered to you and then fight for more. Therefore, Congress, which claims to represent the will of the people for freedom from the foreign yoke, must reject categorically the peace policy and continue the fight with increased determination and more effective methods.

Confusion of issues

The current confusion results from the vagueness of the nature of our goal. As an abstract notion, the ideal of independence remains open to all possible interpretations. The further development of the fight for freedom therefore depends upon a clear positing of our aim. The ideal of independence requires a concrete form. A Constitution which forms the basis for real freedom must be built upon the following principles:

1. Unconditional handing over of power to the people;
2. Abolition of the Native States and the parasitic big landords;
3. Liberation of the peasantry from every kind of exploitation and forced tributes so that the greater part of their surplus produce remains in their possession;
4. Nationalization of the land, of public institutions, mineral resources and banks;
5. Repudiation of debts inherited from the foreign government;
6. Establishment of an irreducible standard of living for the workers through the introduction of minimum wages, reduced working hours, hygienic working conditions, unemployment, sickness-and-old-age-insurance, etc.
7. Control over the economic life of the country by the workers and peasants so that the wealthy minority cannot seize the fruits of national freedom.

The reorganization of Indian society is only possible after the gaining of power through the masses. Political power will never be transferred voluntarily or automatically. This fundamental axiom must be grasped once and for all by those who strive for true national liberty. Otherwise, the people's energy will be wasted in useless adventures; one illusion after another will be aroused, only to be destroyed again by the reality; and the concessions to the wealthy minorities will be celebrated as progress towards freedom, as the 'substance of independence'.

Bombay, 25 February 1931.

Notes

[1] After Gandhi had been invested 'with the powers of a plenipotentiary to negotiate a settlement in the name of the Congress', he saw the Viceroy on 17 February 1931, and after a fortnight of negotiations, agreement was reached to discontinue the Civil Disobedience Movement, with the Government reserving to itself the right 'to take such action as may become necessary' if the Congress failed 'to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement'. 'Perfect secrecy was maintained about the progress of events from day to day and hour to hour'. Sitaramayya, *Indian National Congress*, 1935, pp. 729–46.

[2] The 'travelling Knights' were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Srinivasa Sastri, and '26 Round

Table Conference delegates' who 'made an appeal to the Congress . . . immediately on their landing in India'. Sitaramayya, Ib.

[3] In *INKOPP* 2: 4–5, this comes immediately after 'The Constituent Assembly' article. Presumably it was published in the same issue of *The Masses* (No. 4). The Gandhi–Irwin Agreement was signed on 5 March 1931 and published (S. 481/31 Political) the same day by H. W. Emerson, Secretary to the Government of India. The full text of the Agreement has been reproduced in Sitaramayya, Ib., pp. 738–44. Clause 2 of the Agreement clearly stated that future discussion will be limited to the constitutional scheme discussed at the first Round Table Conference.

[4] According to Jawaharlal Nehru, Clause 2 of the Agreement 'gave me a tremendous shock . . . our objective of independnece . . . seemed to be jeopardized. Ws it for this that our people had behaved so gallantly for a year? . . . in my heart there was a great emptiness as of something precious gone almost beyond recall'. However, as was usual with Nehru, 'I decided, not without great mental conflict and physical distress, to accept the agreement and work for it wholeheartedly'. *Nehru on Gandhi: Selections from Writings and Speeches*, John Day, New York, pp. 66–70.

[5] Between the article 'Peace? No Fight!' and the 'Manifesto' *INKOPP* published in the same issue two printed pages of a report of a workers' meeting in Bombay condemning the RTC proposals. This has not been included here. The *Manifesto* was obviously also published in the 7 March issue of *The Masses* as a supplement.

[6] The First Round Table Conference was inaugurated in London by the King Emperor on 12 November 1930 and ended on 19 January 1931 under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. The delegates agreed to the principle of a Federal system in India and the Federal Structure Subcommittee of the RTC, chaired by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Sankey, submitted its final report on 15 January 1931. Dominion Status would be the objective, but there would be an indefinite 'transitional period' during which Defence, External Affairs, and other 'reserved powers' would remain with the Governor-General.

The Report of the First Round Table Conference 1931; R. Coupland, *Report on the Constitutional Problem of India*. Vol. I *The Indian Problem*, Oxford, 1945.

[7] The 'Declaration' followed the 'Manifesto'. Presumably written by Roy, it carried a list of signatories. Among them were: Sardar Kartar Singh and Sardar Pertap Singh, Akali Dal; Md. Ibrahim, President National Workers' League; G. L. Kandalkar, Girni Kamgar Union; Marcel Fernandez and P. M. Shetty, B. B. and C. I. Railways Employees Union; Joachim Alva; Sunder Kabadi; Umanath Putli; Shashikala Putli; A. Tayab Shaikh; Charles Mascarenas, V. B. Karnik; V. Shetty. 'Some of these signatories constituted the 'Roy group' in Bombay.

SNR.

Traitorous Imperialism*

It is three months since the Gandhi–Irwin-Agreement has been signed. The country was told that it was merely an armistice for the suspension of hostile acts as long as the final peace-negotiations continued. The 'victory', which one perceived in the conclusion of the armistice, would be finally sealed in the shortly commencing negotiations. In the meantime, Congress was endeavouring eagerly to prove its sincerity by observing the conditions of the armistice. The treaty of Delhi was concluded in the greatest hurry, not giving the general masses any time to recognize the consequences of it. Any activity was stopped.

This yearning for peace, however, is one-sided. Since the Mahatma signed the armistice and Congress stopped all its activities, imperialism on its part has not shown the least sign of goodwill. It does not appear in any hurry to commence negotiations on the basis of the treaty of Delhi. It has not even issued a formal political declaration as a reply to the ratification of the treaty by Congress. Without such a declaration, the treaty, as far as imperialism is concerned, is not yet regarded as official. Whilst imperialism took its time over the start of the promised negotiations with Congress, it has quietly dictated its conditions. In the first instance, the plan to hold the conference in India was abandoned. That was a matter of prestige. The haughty spokesmen of imperialism did not wish to come to India to conclude a peace with the defeated opponent. The latter has to go to his arrogant master to beg him for equal partnership. Congress renounced its prestige and rejoiced greatly over the readiness to negotiate. The Mahatma is extremely obliging. The victor can be magnanimous. He agreed to come to London. Imperialism refused to receive the Mahatma as the sole representative of India. This objection was met by the ingenious and original flash of inspiration to dispatch a delegation as the secretariat of the Mahatma. Then Congress was given to understand that the contentious question of Assurance and Reservations was to be regarded as determined already in principle. In view of the declarations made repeatedly by conservative and liberal spokesmen it is completely obvious that the Congress delegation, when it goes to London, will have to swallow the decisions of the Round Table Conference which it had boycotted, hairs and all. Nevertheless, Congress has not altered its attitude and is ready to go as soon as imperialism has the grace to listen to it.[1]

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* Translated from *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition*, Vol. 2, No. 6, pp. 30–32; originally published in *The Masses*, Calcutta, Organ of the Committee for the Organization of the Revolutionary Party of the Working Class of India, No. 6, 1 June 1931. SNR.

It is in no way difficult to see through the treacherous game of imperialism. It has gained a point. It has forced Congress to lay its cards on the table and thereby to betray its weakness. Since imperialism has perceived its opponent's weakness, it can afford to look on calmly. It will not undertake another step until the voluntary liquidation of Congress is completed. Then it will finally dictate its conditions which have already been worked out at this moment.

Imperialism has not miscalculated. Congress is in a state of dissolution. The demobilization (of the Civil Disobedience army) caused by the sudden suspension of all activity cannot be halted or covered up any more by any manoeuvres whatever of the leaders. The Congress-Organization is split due to internal bickering. Almost everywhere rival Congress committees have sprung up. These differences are not based on politics.

It was a healthy sign when Congress went through internal conflicts over opposing political opinions. But blind faith, hero-worship and the establishment of a dictatorship have killed all political life within Congress. The momentary clashes are of a purely personal nature. The opportunists who appeared in the limelight of cheap fame during the regime of the Civil Disobedience struggle are now fighting for posts and perquisites. It will not be long before the corpse of Congress will enter total dissolution and decay. Imperialism is biding its time.

Meanwhile, Congress busies itself with the calamitous but useful distraction of stirring communal conflicts.[2] The Congress leaders have moved obediently into the net. They were in a hurry to push the communal question in preference to the question of national independence into the foreground by deferring the latter *ad calendas graecas*. For as long as imperialism does not cease to increase mutual distrust and to operate with promises, the communal problem cannot be solved. Moreover, the social backwardness which forms the background to the communal and religious conflicts, is a result of colonial exploitation. The Congress leaders, however, have taken the cue from imperialism and have made the solution of the communal question the prerequisite for participation at the Round Table Conference. No one found this more opportune than imperialism. For it is exactly that which enables it to defer the promised negotiations endlessly without taking responsibility for it.

The discontented masses of Congress wanted to give their Mahatma a chance. They believed that in six months everything would be achieved. They still believe that the Mahatma would only accept full Dominion Status, and that he would go to the Round Table Conference only for the purpose of strengthening the position of Congress so that the latter could take up the fight for freedom anew with so much more vigour. All these soap-bubbles of a strong optimism, or rather a blind faith, have now burst. The dead-end street of compromises with imperialism appears to be endless. And at the end of this difficult path there is something quite different from the keenly desired equal partnership. That is crystal clear.

Whoever wants national liberty must have the courage to face reality. The Congress policy has ended in a miserable collapse. Its fear of revolution had to lead to that. A mass-movement is necessarily revolutionary in spite of the reactionary ideology pressed upon it by counter-revolutionary leaders. It cannot be confined within the limits of empty demonstrations. It must explode and bring about more quickly the decisive revolutionary battle. In their fear of this possibility of a giant mass-awakening, the Congress leaders would not allow the Civil Disobedience campaign to be turned into a spontaneous mass-movement. It has remained an artificially staged spectacle which was kept anxiously away from the dynamite of the situation. Now it has collapsed. But the forces of revolution exist, ready to be led into the gigantic freedom-fight. Indeed, the country is in the throes of an acute revolutionary crisis. Suppressed into the deepest abyss of misery, the peasant-masses stand on the threshold of an all-engulfing rebellion. The workers in the towns have to take up the general fight against wage-cuts and unemployment. The impoverished middle-classes—the craftsmen, clerks, small businessmen and petty-bourgeois intellectuals—must join the fight if they do not wish to sink into misery and decay.

It is nothing else but cowardice to speak of peace in the midst of this explosive situation. Congress has abdicated from the proud position to which the rebellious masses had raised it. It has become a helpless and willing victim of imperialist treachery. But the days of imperialism are numbered. It cannot deceive anyone who does not want to be deceived, and they are millions who challenge it. The Revolutionary Party of the Working-class will emerge as a giant from this situation, destined to lead the hosts of the enemies of imperialism. All those who desire national freedom must unite now on the platform of a determined, revolutionary, anti-imperialist mass-struggle. The fight of all oppressed and exploited classes—workers, peasants, craftsmen, clerks, small business people and petty-bourgeois intellectuals—with their various immediate economic demands, must be welded into a common political offensive under the leadership of the Revolutionary Party of the Working-Class.[3]

Notes

[1] At its Karachi Session in March 1931 the Congress endorsed the Gandhi–Irwin Pact. The new Working Committee decided in April that Gandhi would be the sole representative of the Congress at the forthcoming Second Session of the Round Table Conference in London. No new concessions were made by the Government, but 'after several hitches, matters were squared up', and Gandhi sailed for London on 29 August. Sitaramayya,*History of the Indian National Congress*, p.822. The official historian of the Congress did not explain how 'matters were squared up', but he wrote that Gandhi 'hoped that Provincial Governments, the Civil Service and the English mercantile houses would help the Congress to realize its mission', Sitaramayya, ib., p.826.

[2] Communal riots and killings took place in Kanpur in March 1931. Gandhi let it be known that 'his going to the Round Table Conference depended on his ability to solve the Hindu–Moslem question beforehand'. Communal agreement was given top priority in the deliberations of the Congress which outlined a scheme. At the Round Table Conference the communal problem dominated the deliberations.

Sitaramayya, Ibid; Subhaschandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, Calcutta, Vol. II; R. C. Majumder, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1963, Vol. III.

[3] At the end of the article was an announcement 'Fortsetzung folgt' (to be continued). However, this was the last issue of *The Masses*. SNR.

Selections from *Gegen den Strom*

The Karachi Congress

On the Agrarian Question in India

Oppression and Rebellion in Indian Villages

The Position of the Trade Union Movement in India

And Gandhi Sails After All

The Karachi Congress*

Eleven years ago Congress renounced its old tradition of constitutional agitation and initiated the campaign against cooperation with the British government.[1] Thus Congress, without realizing it, raised the banner of rebellion against the foreign rule, and the rebellion threatened to turn immediately into a mighty revolution. After a decade of stormy events the proud banner of rebellion is lowered. That occurred in Karachi. Instead of the shining red banner of the revolution under which the masses have gathered in rapidly growing numbers, the modest white banner of peace has been raised which, in glossing over, is called an armistice. The long established honourable 'holy right' of the oppressed to rebel against the oppressor has been sacrificed on the altar of non-violence. Rebellion inevitably leads to revolution, and revolution would be contemptuous of the cowardly cult of non-violence. Therefore, the spirit of rebellion conjured up by the unbearable conditions of colonial exploitation was to be suffocated in the desecrated atmosphere of capitulation. Thus the Mahatma wishes it. And Congress acted according to the bidding of its dictator.

Congress met in Karachi in order to conclude the chapter of its history which had been introduced in the year 1920. Only a year ago it met in Lahore under the thundering cry of 'Inquilab Zindabad'—'Long live the revolution!', which was carried forward by the rebellious masses.[2] Without regard to the Mahatma's yearning for peace, the forces of revolution, albeit at first merely partly conscious and crystallized, had forced the reluctant leaders to cut loose the anchor-rope and to drift onto the high seas of revolution. Congress had not only declared war on foreign rule. In the speech of the President it had even threatened to sweep away the 'barbaric remains of the past'. In Karachi, however, Congress resolved to let the past years of revolutionary deviation to drop into oblivion. The Mahatma may well rue his revolutionary sins (which he has committed unwittingly) and his 'Himalayan mistakes', but he is as little capable of letting the spirit of Karachi vanquish the spirit of Lahore as he is able to let the Indus flow upward.

The Congress of Karachi was not a political gathering. Rather it was a community of the blind faithful who had gone on pilgrimage to the shrine of a saint and who toyed wantonly with the fate of a nation. The presence of a few opportunist politicians who fawned on the naïve vanity of the Mahatma for selfish motives and of some bankrupt petty-bourgeois radicals could not disperse the atmosphere of a semi-religious holiday. In this political *Kumbha Mela* an occasional weak cry of 'Inquilab Zindabad' only could be tolerated.[3] The reigning spirit of political hypocrisy, intellectual sterility and priestly zeal preferred the pseudo-martial rallying cry 'Follow the General'. But the Congress pursued an ostrich-type policy. It spoke of peace whilst the country is in the throes of a growing revolutionary crisis. In the Mahatma's temple the momentous cry 'Inquilab Zindabad' was rarely heard but it reverberates menacingly throughout the entire country where not peace but the embittered struggle for existence is a reality.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. IV, No. 13, 20 June 1931, pp. 150–51. An introductory editorial note stated that the article was reproduced from *The Masses*, 'Organ of the Committee for the Organization of the Revolutionary Party of the Working Class of India, No. 5 of 15 April 1931'. SNR.

Below the surface of blind faith and political immaturity one could discern, however, a fermenting undefined dissatisfaction. The high priest of Congress took refuge in demagogy to master this dissatisfaction. He urged the gathered throng who had been picked carefully from among his blind followers to support the treaty of Delhi whilst establishing at the same time a new tenet of faith for Congress. And they obeyed and followed their shepherd meekly. The Congress of Karachi can be regarded as the memorial of the personal triumph of the Mahatma but at the same time it has documented the intellectual bankruptcy of his followers. The total collapse of opposition to the policy of shamelessly abandoning the principle of independence in favour of the dominion-constitution shows that Congress once and for all has ceased to be the forum of the struggle for national freedom. The struggle, however, cannot be put down. On the contrary, it grows due to the progressive impoverishment of the majority of the Indian population, to ever greater might and intensity. In view of this fundamental factor in the situation the resolutions of the Karachi Congress have little practical value. They are the expression of a desperate stand against the rising tide of the revolution. But they carry the stamp of weakness.

The unbearable conditions of colonial exploitation are driving the masses to rebel against the ruling system. This rebellion cannot be put aside if the conditions do not, at least partly, change. This in turn cannot happen as long as the system of colonial exploitation remains in force. Congress, however, has abandoned the programme of fighting for the overthrow of the colonial system. It has unequivocally acknowledged the policy of finding a *modus* for India in that system which is driving the masses into misery, in order to head off in this way the present revolutionary situation. Under the constitution of a dominion of His British Majesty, India will continue to remain an English colony. Why does England insist on possessing India as part of its empire if it could not draw any further benefit from this union? Only a child in politics can believe that a constitution obtained with the sanction of the English Parliament will place India in the position of a truly independent country. With an eye on the revolutionary crisis, imperialism has declared itself ready to grant some concessions to the Indian upper class to strengthen with the latter's help its own uncertain position. But these concessions will never go as far as the transference of any important power. In other words, even a complete dominion-constitution as a gift of imperialism cannot be realized. The masses of the Indian population will continue to remain victims of colonial exploitation. Subsequently their position, too, will not change in the least. They must rebel and topple the entire system which in its new form also comprises the upper levels of the Indian people. Let Congress speak of peace yet it cannot prevent the Indian masses from proceeding in this direction.

The banner of rebellion which was raised eleven years ago will therefore be held high. It cannot be pulled down until the system of colonial slavery has been eradicated root to top. In the manner that Congress has raised in its stead the white flag of capitulation it has forfeited the right to speak on behalf of the masses. At the moment when Congress renounced voluntarily a mass-uprising for the overthrow of the colonial system, indeed, when Congress turned against it, it committed political suicide. This would explain the air of unreality which dominated the Congress of Karachi. It was not coincidence that the Congress sessions degenerated into a semi-religious holiday celebration. That was not a reflection of the situation in the country. They spoke of peace—in the background was the war of the starving masses.

The life-or-death problems facing the majority of the Indian people cannot be solved even if imperialism would grant all the demands of Congress. This fight cannot be carried on in conference rooms, in the spirit of giving and taking. The fate of India will be determined in its numerous villages. The battle rages with increasing bitterness. It will progress and end with the destruction of the entire system of exploitation—defying all peace efforts made by Congress.

The determined voice of the rebellious masses could not be completely kept away from the semi-pontifical spectacle in Karachi.[4] We did submit to the Congress a resolution which contained a programme of the inexorable struggle for the conquest of political power by the people. Even in the select company of the Mahatma there were nearly a hundred delegates who signed the resolution. It gained the support of many who were not delegates. Although Congress is obliged on the basis of its own constitution to discuss any resolution which is brought forward by 25 delegates, our resolution was ignored by the bureaucratic apparatus. Nevertheless, pressure made itself felt. This was shown in the unexpected acceptance of an ad hoc resolution which contained the so-called 'fundamental rights'.[5] This document deserves a thorough treatment which we shall undertake in our next issue. In the meantime let us merely point out how this extremely lame and fraudulent 'protection of the interests of the people' has unmasked the true nature of the Mahatma's community. The venerable members of the working committee wanted to put aside the resolution without any discussion, and the Mahatma's godchild, poor Jawaharlal Nehru, had a close shave being branded as a bloody communist if the pope had not defended him against the furious cardinals. Almost half of the committee was against this extremely tame resolution. The big landlords of the entire country raised an indignant protest.[6] That must make the adherents of Congress think. Even in the closest circle around the Mahatma, the class interests are irreconcilable.

Those are the lessons which the revolutionary elements among the adherents of Congress must draw after a critical examination of the proceedings in Karachi. If they learn from these lessons they will have no cause to be depressed and pessimistic. The way lies clearly in front of them. The struggle for freedom continues. They have to ally themselves with those who are forced by necessity to carry out the struggle against colonial slavery even if the latter receives the blessing of the Mahatma. The Karachi Congress has strengthened the policy of the formation of a bloc between foreign imperialism and the indigenous upper social levels as a possible guarantee against the rising tide of the revolution. All who recognize this calamitous significance of the Karachi Congress must take part in bringing into a united line all oppressed and exploited classes in the battle for national freedom.

Notes

[1] This refers to the Non-Cooperation movement launched with a Congress resolution in September 1920.

[2] The Lahore Session of the Congress (December 1929) resolved that 'Swaraj shall mean Complete Independence' and authorized the All-India Congress Committee 'to launch upon a programme of civil disobedience'.

[3] *Kumbh Mela* is the biggest concourse of Hindu monks, ascetics and religious men and women held once every twelve years. At the Karachi Congress 'an open air meeting preliminary to the regular session was arranged on 25 March when persons paying an admission fee of four annas would be allowed to see and hear Gandhi. The collection . . . amounted to Rs 10,000'. Sitaramayya, p. 767.

[4] The Karachi session of the Congress (March 1931: President Vallabhbhai Patel) endorsed the Gandhi–Irwin Pact, which 'effectively discontinued the Civil Disobedience'.

Jawaharlal Nehru was persuaded by Gandhi to move the resolution of endorsement, and Subhas Bose counselled his followers not to oppose it. Roy attended the Karachi Congress under the assumed name Dr Mahmud (although in his false passport he appeared as Banerji), and he prepared an amendment to the resolution describing the Pact as 'a betrayal of India by the bourgeoisie'. Several delegates supported the amendment, and it was moved and seconded by Jamnadas Mehta and Tayab Shaikh. It was, however, ruled out of order. *The Tribune* (Lahore) 30 March and 1 April 1931.

[5] Roy attended the Karachi Congress incognito at Nehru's invitation. According to the Director of Intelligence's Report, the Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic and Social Programme which was drafted by Nehru and adopted with amendments and reservations by the Congress at Karachi, showed Roy's influence. The Report of the Director of Intelligence included in an appendix what was claimed to be the 'Draft Resolution on Fundamental Rights' as drawn up by Roy and what might have provided the basis for Nehru's Draft, although Roy's Draft was undoubtedly far more radical. (Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, 1935; reprint 1976, Appendix V, pp. 349–51). Nehru maintained, however, that 'Roy had absolutely nothing to do with it'. (Nehru, *An Autobiography*, 1962, Indian edition, p. 268). Roy was also quite critical of the resolution (M. N. Roy, *Whither Congress? A Manifesto*, April, 1934).

[6] In fact, Nehru's Draft was debated in the Congress Working Committee for six hours. It was recast and a clause was added making it subject to revision, amendment or addition by the All-India Congress Committee (*The Tribune*, 2 April 1931). In the Subjects Committee, fear was expressed by some members that the resolution would drive landowners away from the Congress. It was passed by a vote of 91 to 50, but subsequently it was amended by the AICC in August 1931 at Bombay to provide reassurance to landowners and indigenous industrialists. This amended resolution is given in Sitaramayya, op. cit., pp. 779–82.

SNR.

On The Agrarian Question In India*

The Committee of the United Provinces for the Organization of the Party of the Revolutionary Working Class of India has published the following 'explanation on the agrarian question':

The resolution on the agrarian question was the most difficult matter in the negotiations at the provincial conference of the Indian National Congress at Mirzapur, and that not without reason; but the result was very disappointing for the peasantry and must have opened the eyes of all who believe that Congress represents the interests of the masses.

Ours is a predominantly agricultural province. For this reason the interests of the peasantry ought to determine the policy of the province. The peasantry faces economic ruin. It is quite unable to raise the payments which the government, the landlords and the money-lenders demand of the peasantry. The misery of the peasants is not a consequence of the current low prices as is generally claimed. The roots go far deeper—in the system of the parasitic large estate owners. Relatively high taxes, exorbitant rents and enforced levies have driven the peasants into total misery. For years they have lived from hand to mouth. What they produce above their bare livelihood is taken from them in the form of taxes, rents and feudal levies and interests. They have no reserves for bad years. They are indeed bankrupt. The current agrarian crisis grows on the basis of this mass impoverishment. It is clear that it cannot be cured by half-hearted measures. Bold measures are necessary. In short, the situation demands impetuously a revolutionary solution.

What have the leaders of our provincial Congress done in this situation? They eagerly reject any responsibility for ever having urged the peasantry to rebel against these unbearable circumstances. They are making excuses so-to-speak to the landlords, and they did prove that they had exerted their whole influence on making sure that the landlords could draw the greatest possible benefit from the ruin of the

* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 4, No. 14, 4 July 1931, pp. 160–62. According to the date at the end of the article it was written on 20 May 1931. According to Intelligence reports, Roy toured incognito in the United Provinces in March and probably May–June, organizing the peasants and trying to 'impregnate congress workers in the affected area with his views . . . He was behind the Central Peasants' League', and 'it was the effects of his spade-work . . . that decided Nehru to launch his no-tax campaign at the end of November 1931.' (*India and Communism*, p. 161) SNR.

peasantry. This indeed they have done, and they announce that they will continue to act in the spirit of the Gandhi–Irwin Agreement, the new gospel of Congress policy. They are not concerned about the starving peasantry but about the strict adherence to the agreement with imperialism; Congress forces them to support the landlords against the peasants.

Pandit Malaviya hit the core of the Congress policy when he stated: 'Demand as much relief as you think right, but do not think of disrupting the armistice'. So the peasants are granted the right to ask for rent-remission, but it is left to the landlords whether they grant it or not, according to their whims. The peasants shall not be permitted to exert pressure on the landlords by refusing payment because that would be a violation of the armistice. If, however, one denies the peasants the right to refuse payment, one delivers them thus to the mercy of the landlords. Mahatma Gandhi did order that the peasants were to be delivered up, indeed, in this manner. In spite of this the 'socialist' Narbada Prasad announces loudly: 'Who but the Mahatma could represent the interests of the peasants?' We believe he himself meant it ironically.

In the resolution itself as also in the explanations by the responsible leaders Congress admits that the peasants are incapable of paying. Nevertheless the President of the Conference rejected the submission which holds the government responsible when the peasants, unable to pay the rent, were driven into disobedience action. This [was done] again in the name of the new gospel. He addressed the conference with the words: 'Do understand, this submission violates the Gandhi–Irwin Agreement.' In this way the helpless peasants are bound hand and foot through this agreement which was concluded without their knowledge, and Congress voluntarily assumes the thankless role of acting as the representative of landowners and rent-collectors. That is the true nature of the Congress policy.

> 'The Conference recommends to the local Congress-Committees . . . to approach the landlords and to prevail upon them to make respective rent-remission, to cease further ejections [of tenants], and to reinstate the ejected tenants on the basis of a suitable rent-reduction. The Conference further recommends that the Committees support the estate-owners in the collection of rent according to the agreement made with Congress . . . The Conference asks the landlords not to employ any illegal measures in raising the rents and if possible not to drive the tenants from their plots . . .'
>
> 'The Conference recommends to the tenants that they must not nurture any hostile attitudes towards the landlords, and in view of the fact that the rent-refusal campaign has ceased after the Gandhi–Irwin Agreement, that they must regularly pay the rents fixed by Congress in agreement with the landlord despite all difficulties.'

Congress policy is shown in a still clearer light if we take a look at some paragraphs of a declaration by Mr Sitla Sahai, leader of the Congress movement among the peasantry of Rai Bareili and the originator of the resolution at the Conference of Mirzapur.

> It is our sincere wish to secure for the Taluqdars [landlords] a rent as high as possible, but we cannot accomplish the impossible, that is, force the peasant to pay sums which he does not have . . . In spite of our utmost efforts we have not succeeded in forcing the peasant to pay the full amount of even the reduced demands . . . On the other hand we have succeeded in creating a friendlier atmosphere in the sense that they pay as much as they can afford . . . We challenge the government to prove that slow receipt of payments is the fault of Congress . . . Congress has done its best to suppress any use of force . . . Various cases can be listed where large numbers of tenants who had been provoked by landlords, had banded together ready to fight, but Congress volunteers have dispersed them . . . The Provincial Congress Committee of Rai Bareili had issued some pamphlets which request the 'kisans' (tenant-farmers) to make the payments.

These excerpts require no commentary. They speak for themselves. However, a few remarks on the matter are made herewith in case those adherents of Congress who are genuinely concerned for the welfare of the peasants have not quite grasped their significance. Congress proposes to induce the landlords to grant a suitable reduction of rents. But who decides what a suitable recompense is? Obviously the Congress-leaders. However, there is no guarantee that the proposals of the Congress-leaders will be accepted by the landlords. With the resolution to exclude the use of any pressure on the landlords, Congress practically leaves the last word to them. An agreement on any rent-remission can thus only occur according to the conditions of the landlords. And Congress accepts the responsibility for inducing the peasants to make their payments on the basis of such 'agreements'. Sitla Sahai admits in his declaration that the remissions granted by the landlords are on occasion nowhere near sufficient. Nevertheless, Congress makes 'every effort in order to get the peasants to pay', and if they cannot pay, then Congress makes propaganda for the goodness, amiability and benevolence of the landlords by creating a 'friendly atmosphere'. This means that peasants, as soon as they are in a position to pay again, shall be forced to fulfil their sacred duty towards the benevolent landlords.

Congress asks the landlords not to chase away the peasants and to re-employ the ones driven away provided they pay a suitable rent. Here, too, the decision on the notion of suitable is left to the landlords. This means that Congress regards as justified the ejection from the land of peasants in those cases where they cannot pay the 'suitable rent'. The reasons for this inability to pay are not even taken into account. Furthermore, Congress does not object in principle to 'illegal measures' or the ejection of peasants from their land. It merely asks the landlords to avoid such measures as far as possible. This means that it acknowledges in principle the right of the landlord to fix a rent and to eject peasants. The class-character of Congress emerges here in its starkest clarity. The position of the peasant may be improved provided that the sacred rights of landownership are not violated in the slightest. In the resolution of Mirzapur the leaders of Congress admit that they have concluded contracts with the landlords which are unfavourable to the peasants. In the resolution it is acknowledged that the peasants find it difficult to pay the rents fixed in these agreements. This notwithstanding, Congress insists that the peasants must pay in spite of these difficulties. It sacrifices the interests of the peasants on the altar of the greedy landowners under the pretext that the rent-refusal campaign has come to an end through the Gandhi–Irwin Agreement. Firstly: Why should the peasants be victims to the machination of the most shameless capitulation of the cowardly nationalist bourgeoisie? Secondly: Why should an agreement concluded without their consent be binding on them? Thirdly: What right does Congress have to break off a movement which it did not initiate? It is a well-known fact which is evidence for the class character of Congress that it has never argued for a strengthening of the peasant-movement in the Zamindari-(large leaseholders-) provinces. The rally-cry of Congress is: 'No taxes'. This means, abolition of the tribute to the government. In the United Provinces the peasants have acted independently under the stress of the situation. The Congress leaders there have attempted to bring the peasant-movement under their protective wings in order to halt its development. Now they want to kill it off completely. But the challenging voice of the rebellious peasantry could not be suppressed completely at the Conference of Mirzapur. It was heard through Amol Sharma, an ordinary volunteer, who declared that the peasants could not pay more than four annas in every Rupee and that they would have to refuse obedience if they should be asked for more.

In contrast to this voice from the people we heard Sitla Sahai announce proudly how Congress has suppressed all acts of violence—of course not those of the landlords whose existence alone is a violation of the peasantry. By supporting the large estates Congress ridicules its own cult of non-violence. It preaches this hypocritical cult to prevent the rebellion of the suppressed. Sitla Sahai, a true pupil of the Mahatma, declares shamelessly that if the peasants were to offer resistance to any acts of violence of the landlords, Congress would restrain them. And the Conference at Mirzapur meekly advises the peasants to entertain no enmity and no hatred against the landlords. In reality, then the cult of non-violence means the support of the violent suppression of the workers and peasants by the capitalists and the landlords.

The small rent-remissions which a few landlords have been ready to make are no sacrifice at all for these proud pillars of a declining Indian society. They have only been ready to make these reductions on the condition that on its part the government also grants them a corresponding reduction. This reduction is not a positive gain for the peasantry because they can pay as little as if the reduction had never occurred. An improvement of their condition would only then occur when the reductions were so great that they would retain a part of their minimal earnings. In that case the landlords would have to be satisfied with very little. It is necessary to drive these lords out of their parasite existence in order to bring about a real alleviation of the situation of the peasantry. Indeed, the disappearance of these parasites who swallow a large part of the national income is a fundamental prerequisite for the progress and prosperity of the whole country.

Lastly, the lowering of income and rent only signifies for the masses further impoverishment, and the peasantry forms the overwhelming majority of the Indian population. The government will, without question, balance this loss of income from primary produce by imposing new taxes. The slight increase in income tax in the new *etat* brought about an angry protest from the capitalists. Not much can be expected from this source. The only way, then, remains, that of indirect taxes, especially consumer-tax. This has already shown itself in a forcing up of prices. Whatever flow-on the peasants get from a reduction of rents is purely illusory. And on top of it they have to pay dearly for factory-produced goods.

After Congress has taken up a clear position regarding the relations between landlords and the peasantry, those who genuinely stand for the interests of the latter must proceed independently. In view of its clearly defined policy Congress can no longer be the gathering point of the peasantry. The contrast between the two is too crass and irreconcilable. The peasants are driven into a situation where they are going to rebel against and overthrow the system which has delivered them into the present condition of a hopeless collapse. Congress, on the other hand, is the declared defender of the declining system of large landownership and attempts to strengthen the latter at the cost of the peasantry. If the peasant movement were to become a part and tool of Congress, then it would be robbed of its strength and be sacrificed to the interests of the landlords.

The peasantry which has been betrayed in this way by the bourgeoisie and its representative, Congress, must see its true leadership in the revolutionary proletariat. The tenant-farmers have to organize themselves independently of Congress into fighting agents for the defence of the interests of the peasantry. The peasantry must reject the unreasonable demands of Congress and pursue an inexorable fight for the following demands:

1. Lowering of rent on land by 50 per cent;
2. Completely rent-free land for the poor peasants who exist in 'uneconomical areas';
3. Cancellation of rural debts;
4. Abolition of all feudal, semi-feudal and similar burdens and levies;
5. Fixed rental rates.

For the support of these immediate demands the peasants must form local (village) committees (Panchayats). The committees have to offer resistance to and take revenge for the brutalities of the landlords. With the support of the masses of peasants and other oppressed and exploited classes on the land the local committees will become at the given moment the agents of the rebellion against the ruling system. They will finally assume the functions of the local government agencies, drive out the landlords and money-lenders, and distribute the land only to those who actually work on it.

20 May 1931.

Oppression and Rebellion in Indian Villages*

S. K. Vidyarthi

India has its full share of the world economic crisis. The rural depression is probably felt strongest here and to such a degree that one can observe throughout the country unmistakable signs of a gigantic peasant uprising. Imperialism, of course, has been scared by this sinister prospect. It seeks to strengthen its shaken position by gaining the services of the nationalistic bourgeoisie. The latter in its turn is no less frightened by the rising tide of the revolution. They are running helter-skelter into the arms of imperialism. Their fear of the revolution enables imperialism to buy their services at the lowest rate. But the deal which began in March with the conclusion of the Gandhi–Irwin pact has not been terminated yet. The principles of this barter, however, have been fixed definitively at the Round-Table Conference in London last year. Although these principles mean a minimal progress over the miserable proposals of the Simon Commission, they too continue to keep the Indian masses within the tight confines of colonial slavery. Nonetheless the National Congress has accepted these principles as a basis for the approaching negotiations on a final compromise with English imperialism. It has forgotten its demand of total national independence. It does not even insist any longer on a full dominion-constitution. The nationalistic bourgeoisie represented by Congress is ready to be satisfied with the 'essence of independence', and Gandhi alone knows what kind of an unknown force that is. He goes as the sole representative of the National Congress to London[1] This fact must astound the European who is dealing with the situation in India. But there is method in this apparent madness. It is a clever trick of the leaders of Congress to shirk their duties, so that Gandhi can act completely under the dictates of the industrialists, merchants and bankers whose representatives (who do not belong to the National Congress) are accompanying the saint to London as 'advisers'. The petty-bourgeois leaders of Congress will stay at home to mislead with demagogic manoeuvres and phrases the masses who thus—as the price for some concessions to the bourgeoisie—are surrendered to the mercy of imperialism.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 4. No. 17, pp. 196–7, 15 August 1931. Signed S. K. Vidyarthi. This was one of several aliases used by Roy for clandestine work and writings. Though published in August, the article was dated Bombay, 20 June 1931. This and the following article published in the same issue of *Gegen den Strom* were probably the last pieces written by Roy before his arrest on 21 July. SNR.

They will probably not succeed, however, with these clever tricks. No political machinations whatever will remove the severe economic depression which is rapidly developing into a revolutionary crisis. Pauperization or total bankruptcy of the peasantry is the background to the economic depression and the political crisis in India. Although India is placed in the category of the modern industrial countries, it is to an overwhelming degree a rural country. Approximately 70 per cent of the population is employed in agriculture or related industries. Commerce, industry and finance, therefore, are determined in India by the economic situation of the peasants. Agricultural production in two-thirds of the country occurs under feudal, semi-feudal or similar ownership relations. The method of production is a very backward one. In the remaining third of the country the land-user leases the ground directly from the imperialist state. In appearance and according to the law he is not burdened by feudal levies; but the rent, taxes and exorbitant interest rates swallow almost all of what he produces in surplus of his daily needs; the practical effect is that he actually lives in a condition of slavery. In reality, he is rather an agricultural wage-earner than a farmer. Under such circumstances the masses of peasants have always been kept at the bare subsistence level. As they were robbed practically of their entire surplus production, they have been totally unable to improve the methods and means of cultivation. During the last ten years the ruin of the peasantry has been a check on the economic life of the country. The decline of the purchasing power of the overwhelming majority of the population has had a detrimental effect on commerce and has frustrated plans for industrialization. On the other hand, the decline in trade has severely affected public finances which are kept artificially balanced through forcible deflation of the currency and reduced imports in order to maintain a sufficiently large surplus over exports to pay the imperialist booty. This uncertainty in the national economy has become considerably worse through the catastrophic drop in agricultural prices. The producers of the chief goods, such as cotton, jute, wheat, oilseed etc., cannot sell their products today at even half the price of production cost. The rent for an acre of wheat-producing land in the north, for instance, is approximately 18 rupees, whilst the wheat it produces at the current price-level does not yield more than 7 rupees.

Over 200 million peasants are therefore facing starvation. They could recover somewhat if the collection of all taxes and rents were suspended. However, that is not possible, because in that case a large loss would occur in public revenue unless the large estate-owners were forced to make up the corresponding shortfall out of their own pockets. Almost 40 per cent of revenue is made up of rates and taxes. Therefore, the last drop of blood has to be squeezed out of the impoverished peasantry. That makes the situation still worse. The internal market is, indeed, destroyed. Commerce will decline even further. Industries will be ruined. The emergence of new ones is quite out of the question. Unemployment will increase. That is by no means a forecast; it is an actual process. Under the pretext of reduced revenue, the railways are dismissing thousands of labourers daily. The situation of workers in the tea-plantations is similar. The boycott has created an artificial high in the cotton textile industry which alone is prospering amidst a general economic low. Nonetheless, there are over 40,000 unemployed textile-workers. The bankruptcy of the peasant masses has ruined the remaining rural crafts which in turn has taken away employment for millions [of people]. Finally, there are uncounted millions of farm-labourers who have been extremely impoverished by the rural crisis. All in all, the number of unemployed in India is estimated to be close to 40 million. There isn't the slightest prospect of procuring any alleviation for these starving millions. Whatever the outcome of the present negotiations may be between imperialism and the nationalist bourgeoisie, it will not remove the economic crisis which is rocking the foundations of the ruling order.

In this situation a rebellion of the peasants is inevitable. Last year, the peasants gathered enthusiastically under the banner of Congress because Congress agitated for the suspension of tax-payments. It is characteristic that Congress only carried out this agitation in those areas where the peasants leased the land directly from the state. Congress never approached those peasants who were under the domination of the large estate-owners. In fact, the movement developed more radically, regardless of the attitude of Congress, in those areas where feudal conditions still prevailed because there the peasantry was more severely oppressed.

After the conclusion of the 'armistice' with imperialism, Congress broke off the tax-refusal campaign.[2] But Congress can draw up as many resolutions as it likes, the peasants simply cannot pay, neither the government nor the landlords. It is estimated that they are hardly able to pay 25 per cent of the debt-obligations. That notwithstanding, Gandhi has issued to the peasantry an appeal in which peasants are asked to make all possible efforts in their power to pay their tributes to the landlords. Ignoring all the facts of the situation, he commands the peasants to pay 50 to 75 per cent! As a matter of course, he preaches the peasants a sermon on their duties towards the landlords and declares that the rights of these parasites must be protected.

But the forces of the revolution are growing too powerful for a Gandhi to control them. The peasantry is arriving under the leadership of those communists who have not isolated themselves in a vanishing sect and who are full of ultra-left phrases. They have taken a stand through a programme of action with a number of part-demands for the peasantry. The chief demands are: *reduction of land-rates by 75 per cent*, as long as the current depression lasts, 50 per cent reduction when 'normal' conditions return; *abolition of all feudal tributes; cancellation of all farm-debts; control of usury profits*—interests not higher than 6 per cent per annum, and *firm rental agreements*. From this platform of minimum demands as a preparation, the peasant masses advance to a gigantic revolutionary offensive under the direction of the Communist Party which is rapidly growing out of the violent struggle of the masses.

Matters are coming to a head particularly fast in the *United Provinces*, the upper Ganges valley, the bulwark of the most corrupt feudalism.[3] The whole province with approximately 40 million inhabitants is in the hands of some 120 estate-owners. The latter were installed in their parasitic existence after the Sepoy-rebellion of 1857 when they assisted the British in quelling the rebellion. In consideration of these great services acquired at that critical moment, imperialism ever since has protected the interests of these parasites. Now they are after the blood of the rebellious peasants. And not only the government but even National Congress hurry to their aid. The leaders of the peasant movement are persecuted, their freedom of movement restricted and their voice suppressed through arbitrary police decrees. Frequently, the hand of the leaders of Congress can be recognized behind these oppressive measures. They demand from government agencies that they suppress the communists who are disturbing the atmosphere of peace which Gandhi seeks to create at the expense of the peasantry. But these communists are of not insignificant strength. They have been carried on the crest of a mighty revolutionary wave. They are enjoying the confidence of the masses. Therefore, they cannot be suppressed. Under their leadership thousands of peasants come together daily in different parts of the whole province in order to press their demands. Peasant committees are emerging as the agents of the struggle out of this gigantic mass-movement. The most active revolutionary elements are gathering around these committees as a 'volunteer corps'. Under the prudent guidance of comrades who are quite familiar with the situation, this movement is developing, avoiding premature violent outbursts which could be disastrous. First, the forces have to be gathered together. The movement has to spread to other provinces. The peasant-committees as the fighting agents must gain a firm footing in order to be transformed at the decisive moment into agencies of power. The peasants of the United Provinces have found a capable leader in our Comrade Brajesh Singh, who himself is the younger brother of a great feudal landlord.[4] The 'red prince' has become the terror of the ruling officials and the pseudo-officials (of Congress). The peasant-masses are leaving Gandhi to follow him. A week ago the police appeared at a conference, called by Congress, to arrest Comrade Singh; but, as they did not dare to come forward in the presence of 12,000 peasants, they waited quietly until Comrade Singh voluntarily gave himself up after the conclusion of the conference. He was arrested on the charge of being a member of an illegal society. However, he was released again on a bond of 5000 rupees. At the conference he tabled a resolution according to which the peasants will pay as much as they are able to and according to which they have the right to stop payments if they are unable to pay. The Congress bureaucrats opposed this resolution with all their might but, nevertheless, it was carried unanimously.

The bourgeois press raises the alarm—'Revolution in the United Provinces!' They have good reason to be nervous. But when the revolution arrives it will not only have one province in its grasp but the entire country which is rapidly moving in this direction.

Bombay, 20 June 1931.

Notes

[1] According to the official historian of the Congress, 'most of the members of the W. C. (Congress Working Committee) were of the opinion that the deputation should consist not of a single individual but of about 15 members, Government was quite willing to accommodate up to 20'. However in the end 'opinion was unanimous that Gandhi alone should represent India'. Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, p. 784.

[2] The Gandhi–Irwin Pact of March 1931 clearly spelled out that the Congress would discontinue the 'non-payment of Land Revenue and other legal dues' together with the rest of the programme of Civil Disobedience. Instructions were issued accordingly. Sitaramayya, ib., 769.

[3] Roy was in the United Provinces in March, April and May, working incognito among the peasants. Peasant unrest and agitation caused much alarm to the government which took emergency measures to control it (Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, XVIII, cmnd. 4014, 1931–2, 'East India Emergency Measures'). According to the Report of the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, Roy's 'efforts in the United Provinces were attended with a considerable measure of success . . . it was the effects of the spade-work which Roy put in . . . that decided Nehru to launch his "not tax" campaign at the end of November 1931 . . . he [Roy] was behind the Central Peasants' League . . . and the League's efforts were attended with a considerable measure of success in certain parts of the province'. Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, p. 161.

[4] Singh was the Raja of Kalakankar's younger brother. He had been recruited by Roy in Germany and sent to India. However, he subsequently deserted Roy and returned to Europe.

SNR.

The Position of the Trade Union Movement in India*

S. K. Vidyarthi

The Trade Union Congress will probably meet at the beginning of July.[1] Although the communist General Secretary and the fascist President have made a united effort to call the meeting, they will probably have to defer it. The trade union movement is currently split into no less than four groups, and the official communist strategy has contributed a great deal to this chaotic situation. If the Trade Union Congress meets regardless of sensible advice from the persons who are working for unity, then it will be a faction meeting. Many trade unions that are still members of the Trade Union Congress will not participate in the meeting. The few that will take part are in their turn split into two groups which are fighting over possession of the corpse.

It will be difficult for the foreign comrades to find their way in the chaotic conditions of the trade union movement if they do not know anything of its past history.

The last meeting of the Trade Union Congress took place in 1929.[2] At that time the movement was still united, and the communists were about to spread their influence very successfully. During the two preceding years a series of mass strikes had occurred which comprised hundred-thousands of workers from the railways, mines, cotton, jute and iron industries.[3] The communists strongly participated in the leadership of these great battles. The seven-week long general strike of the Bombay textile-workers stood fully under communist leadership. Another strike of 80,000 railway employees was also under communist leadership until it was simply abandoned due to ultra-left sectarianism. A meeting of the Trade Union Congress based on so rich an experience in mass fighting offered the communists a brilliant opportunity for strengthening their influence. The communists were, however, in the minority. Only two large trade unions were completely under their direction. In many other important trade unions the reformist influence was yet strong albeit on the wane. The strategy of a united front was no longer applied. The reformists were in an unfavourable position. They were hardly able to resist the policy of an energetic mass struggle when the immediate problems of the movement were brought forward. In a large number of trade unions their roots were still too strong for them to be ejected from the leadership of the Trade Union Congress. One still has to share the leadership for some time until their position is greatly undermined and the conditions exist for their eventual removal.

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 4, No. 17, 15 August 1931, pp. 186–8. The article was dated Bombay, 26 June 1931. SNR.

The communists, whose influence was yet very disorganized, acted like swashbucklers. They wrongly assessed the ratio of forces and openly raised the claim to the conquest of the Trade Union Congress leadership. The battle was by no means fought over immediate questions of the life of the movement. The communists forced a premature split on the grounds of matters of secondary importance. It was a question of participating in a government-appointed commission to examine the labour relations and to bring forward legislative proposals. The reformists had already taken up their seats on the commission.[4] They did not wish to give way; however, they could not be beaten by the left-wing under communist influence. The Nationalists were the deciding factor, having joined the trade union movement in pursuit of their own purposes. The latter are no better regarding trade union matters than the reformists. At this moment, however, the slogan of nationalist policy was the boycott; for this reason they were against participating in the Labour commission. The nationalist–communist coalition outvoted the reformists who as an answer left the Trade Union Congress. In order to gain the support of the nationalists, the communists had agreed to share the booty of victory. A nationalist leader with explicit fascist inclinations became president of what was left of Congress, whilst the general secretariat fell to the communist candidate.[5] Such a crew could not possibly lead to anything good. It was the result of an opportunism of the worst kind, such as we always find hidden behind ultra-left tactics.

It immediately became quite obvious that the reformists were by no means beaten. On the contrary, they were unharmed and they emerged from the conflict with a firm bloc of the best-organized unions behind them. The fascist-communist combination collapsed as could not have been otherwise. One union after another left the Trade Union Congress. Some joined the newly-founded reformist Trade Union Federation whilst others remained neutral. Following that the communists had nothing better to do than to cut off the branch on which they were sitting. Their bulwark was the textile workers' union (Red-Flag Union) of Bombay. They destroyed this union by driving it into a second general strike in 1929 on very trivial grounds. The preceding general strike had just been concluded with a part-victory for the workers. However, they were quite exhausted from the long-lasting struggle. They were absolutely unable to take up a new fight straight away. The second general strike which demanded the reinstatement of a few employees who had lost their jobs in consequence of the [previous] strike ended in a devastating defeat. The economic depression had begun. The mill-owners greeted the strike as a welcome pretext for closing their factories. Tens of thousands of workers became unemployed. Starvation forced the remaining ones to accept work on the conditions dictated by the employers. The workers' morale was completely shattered. The union was destroyed. The membership dropped from 82,000 to less than one thousand![6]

To crown this collapse of their ultra-left policy, the communists allowed the rump executive to pass a resolution which called for a general strike throughout the whole country in preparation for an armed uprising which was to establish the soviet republic of India. It sounds incredible, but is a fact. This call, of course, faded away unheard, yet other trade unions rejected the resolution and left the Trade Union Congress which deteriorated into a general staff without an army. Now the reformists moved over to the offensive. Whilst the communists had demolished their own position, the reformists had reinforced theirs. Supported directly or indirectly by the majority of trade unions, they emerged as the proponents of unity of the trade union movement and demanded the expulsion of the communists as *conditio sine qua non*. The communists who had been completely ruined planned to call a meeting of the Trade Union Congress. That would have accomplished their total isolation and would have surrendered the entire movement to the reformists. The Trade Union Congress, however, could not be called because of the simple fact that it merely existed in name and actually did not have a single trade union behind it.

At this point of time a new factor has made its presence felt in the movement, and which has since succeeded in halting the reformists' offensive, in strengthening once more the communist influence in the trade union movement and in creating the basis for a united Trade Union Congress on the platform of the class struggle. This new factor is represented by those communists who reject the bankrupt ultra-left sectarianism, and who aim to develop a truly Communist party which is so urgently needed in the present situation of the maturing revolutionary crisis. The growing Communist Party of India is provisionally known as the 'Roy-Group' in distinction from the decimated clique of the ultra-left adventurers.

Already a year ago our group began work on the reconstruction of the Bombay Red-Flag-Union from whose leadership the official communists had been banished by the workers themselves.[7] In the course of a few months the union has regained its position to a certain extent. In the name of the resurrected Red-Flag Union our group took the initiative in the campaign for union unity. In a manifesto the desire for unity which could be heard from various sides was supported; it was, however, pointed out that this unity could not be realized as long as it merely remained an underfined notion. A concrete unity-platform was put up in the form of a manifesto which declared that unity was only possible by rejecting the rightist reformists and the leftist sectarianism.[8] The platform established the principle that the trade union is an agent in the class struggle and as such can never have as its aim the reconciliation of capital and labour, and [it] contained [also] a minutely detailed immediate action-programme. The immediate demands of the workers were succinctly formulated. The uninterrupted energetic fight for the accomplishment of these demands was established as the function of the trade union. The platform expressed opposition to sending delegates to Geneva and against the joining with Amsterdam.[9] Finally, it contained the suggestion to defer the proposed meeting of the Trade Union Congress in order to gain time for an energetic campaign for unity. Nine Bombay unions immediately joined this unity-platform. A committee was formed to carry out this campaign. The official communists found themselves in a hopeless minority; they quietly dropped their plan to call the Trade Union Congress and declared merciless was on the Roy-Group as 'the uppermost revolutionary task of the moment'. Indeed, they are serious about this 'uppermost revolutionary task'. They used any means to destroy 'these enemies of the Communist International', including denunciation to the police which they actually did without making a secret of it! But the rise of the Communist Party could not be halted by this discreditable eagerness of the 'loyal-to-the-line Comintern adherents'. In defiance of the hundred per cent puritans, the 'renegades' are destined to save communism in India as well as in other countries. 'The enemies of the Communist-International' will re-establish the prestige of the Communist International.

In the course of a few months a strong centre-group had crystallized, based on the unity-platform. This is by far the strongest and most important group which also comprises the railway-employees federation. In Bombay on 10 June a Unity-Conference took place which had been called by the Railwaymen's Federation. Forty-three trade unions from all parts of the country were represented. The official communist speaker refused flatly to have anything to do with the 'traitorous unity-campaign' which had been put into motion by the large mass of people. They thundered for class struggle and against class collaboration, but they refused to be placed with others on the one platform of the class struggle. In spite of the opposition of reactionary leaders of the right wing and to the distress of the imperialist press, the Conference adopted the platform as a basis for unity and appointed a committee for the execution of the unity-campaign. The secretary of this committee is our comrade A. T. Sheikh.[10] The unity-committee does indeed represent the whole trade union movement with the exception of the official communist group *which today does not have a single functioning trade union behind it.* Although the leader of the right wing refused to be a member of the committee, representatives of trade unions that are members of the (Indian) Federation of Trade Unions did participate. Thus, the right wing has practically recognized the unity-platform. Indeed, the leaders of the right wing changed their attitude after the Conference and even went as far as to express their readiness to abolish the Federation provided they were granted some concessions regarding their attendance at the Geneva Conference. We are prepared to make these concessions on an insignificant point in the interests of unity on the basis of a clear platform of class struggle. The formula on which both sides will probably agree reads as follows, that the Trade Union Congress as an organization will not send any delegates to Geneva, nor will it recognize government nominations to official bodies, but that it will not prevent individual union members from attending it in a *personal capacity*. The Trade Union Congress, however, reserves the right to criticize such action by individual people and to disclose the true role of the International Labour Office of the League of Nations. A further question of dispute of an international association will be left open for the time being in that the Trade Union Congress will decide neither in favour of Amsterdam nor of Moscow.

The right wing had not placed itself on the unity-platform of class struggle of its own accord. It had been compelled into this position. The split happened because of secondary matters. If they are granted concessions regarding these matters then they cannot proceed without showing their true face. And that they cannot permit because in that case they would lose the influence on their own unions. Even the centre-group which stands behind the Railwaymen's Federation does not act of its own free will. The leaders of this group are as untrustworthy as the obviously right-wing ones. Besides, most of them are bourgeois–nationalist politicians who are giving themselves a slight air of 'socialism' to mislead the masses. The deciding factor, however, is not these opportunist politicians but the numerous local functionaries of trade unions dominated by them. These are acting under pressure from the masses and therefore support the action-programme for the defence of the immediate interests of the workers.

With the support of the greater part of the movement, the unity-committee has proposed that the meeting of the Trade Union Congress be deferred for three months, at which time preparations for the meeting as being a representative one in the broadest sense and for the rebuilding of unity based on the platform of class struggle in support of the immediate demands of the workers will have been made. Meanwhile the leaders of the nominally existing Trade Union Congress—its fascist president and communist general secretary—are keenly intent on having the meeting now which, in the given circumstances, will be a vacuous spectacle. But they have their reasons—each his particular ones. The former wants to drive out the communists which he will not be able to do if the Congress is a representative meeting. In that case the official communists will depart; but they will predictably be replaced by others who know how to use their influence on the movement more effectively. The official communists wish to retain their empty posts as functionaries which they will certainly lose if once more (the Trade Union) Congress becomes the functioning agent of the united movement. For the sake of an empty post these pure communists do not hesitate to sabotage the process of unification of the whole movement on the platform of class struggle under a truly revolutionary leadership. They may be able to do yet a little more harm, but they are unable to prevent the rise of the genuine Communist People's Party as leader of the masses. The day is approaching rapidly when the Communist International will have to choose between a handful of mercenary fanatics, who have done their utmost to botch up and ruin the movement, and the real Communist Party grown out of the conditions of the country and which is the true leader of the revolutionary struggle of the masses.

Bombay, 26 June 1931.

Notes

[1] The Eleventh Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress took place at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta from 4 to 7 July 1931, under the presidentship of Subhas Chandra Bose. During the session the Communist group broke away from the AITUC, and it subsequently formed the Red Trade Union Congress. Roy's followers, jointly with the nationalists, gained control of the AITUC. Tayab Shaikh, Roy's right-hand man, was elected one of the Secretaries. *Labour Gazette* (Bombay), X, 11 (1931).

[2] The Tenth Session of the AITUC was held at Nagpur form 30 November to 1 December 1929 under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru. At this session the moderate trade union leaders (S. M. Joshi, Chamanlal, V. V. Giri, and others) dissociated themselves from the AITUC, and formed the Indian Trade Union Federation (ITUF). P. S. Gupta, *A Short History of the All-India Trade Union Congress*, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 157–67.

[3] The biggest strike of 1928 was that of the textile workers in Bombay involving 1,30,000

people, but there were also strikes of textile workers at Sholapur, of dockers and marine workers at the Calcutta port, of railway workers at Lilooah, of iron and steel workers at Jamshedpur, of jute workers at Chengail and Bauria, of workers in the South Indian Railway, and so on. The total number of strikes and lock-outs in that year was 203, involving 5,06,851 workers; man-days lost amounted to 3,16,47,404. *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India*. London, 1931.

[4] This refers to the Whitley Commission or Royal Commission on Labour in India. Both N. M. Joshi and Diwan Chamanlal had accepted their appointment to the Commission. At the Nagpur session of the AITUC, the Communist Secretary of the Girni Kamgar Union moved a resolution condemning Joshi and Chamanlal for working on the Commission. This was one of several reasons for the withdrawal of the latter from the AITUC. P. S. Gupta, op. cit.

[5] At the Nagpur session, the Executive Council had accepted the credentials of 54 unions with a membership of 189,436. After the split, there were 21 unions representing a membership of 92,797 left in the AITUC. This reduced body elected at the open session Subhas Chandra Bose as President and the Communist Leader S. V. Deshpande as General Secretary. S. D. Punekar, *Trade Unionism in India*, Bombay, 1948, p. 326.

[6] According to Dange, the Girni Kamgar Union had attained a membership of 'over 1,00,000 in January 1929' (*Documents of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. III, c. 1928, New Delhi, 1982, p. 132). According to the *Labour Gazette*, Bombay (January 1929) the figure claimed by the GKU was 65,000 in 1928. Karnik's figure is 70,000 (V. B. Karnik, *Indian Trade Unions: A Survey*, Bombay, 1968, p 40). However, at the Nagpur session of the AITUC, the GKU claimed a membership of 54,000. This was disputed by Joshi, Chamanlal, Giri and other moderate trade unionists on the ground that the GKU had submitted no audited statement of accounts. According to them the GKU membership was no more than 6,000. In the end, through the casting vote of the president, Jawaharlal Nehru, a membership figure of 40,000 was accepted and GKU given affiliation to AITUC. The extremists then gained control of the AITUC. The moderates seceded to form IFTU (31 unions with approximately 96,000 members). By the end of 1929, the GKU was reduced to a membership of not more than 800. S. D. Punekar, op. cit.; P. S. Gupta, op. cit.

[7] Deshpande was expelled from the GKU at the general meeting on 12 October 1930. *Labour Gazette*, X, 7, 1931, p. 702. The GKU was 'captured by Roy's lieutenants early in 1931'. H. Williamson, op. cit., p. 159.

[8] The Royists started their campaign for reunification of moderate trade unions with the AITUC even before the split of July 1931. A Draft Platform of Trade Union Unity was drawn up by Roy early in July (mentioned here as the manifesto); this was adopted by the now Royist-controlled GKU, and it became the basis of successive efforts in the following years to unite all non-communist unions in an All-India federation. J. P. Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India : M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy 1920–1939,* Princeton, 1971, pp. 201–206; also V. B. Karnik, *Indian Trade Unions*. P. S. Gupta, op. cit., pp. 197–228, includes the text of the Platform of Unity, but gives the credit for the draft to G. L. Kandalkar, President of GKU and at that time very close to the Royists, and does not mention Roy. However, Roy's authorship is noted by the Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Williamson, op. cit. p. 163.

[9] The reference is to the International Labour Organization at Geneva and the International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam. Both were opposed by AITUC and supported by ITUF.

[10] The unity meeting was chaired by Jamnadas Mehta, President of All-India Railwaymen's Federation, at that time a follower of Roy. The seven-member unity committee included Tayab Shaikh, Roy's chief lieutenant, Jamnadas himself, and C. Y. Chitnis, an important member of the Royist group in Bombay. SNR.

And Gandhi Sails After All!*

After hesitating a long time, Gandhi eventually sailed: in his person goes the sole representative of the National Congress.[1] He sails at a critical moment; England today is experiencing a crisis of unprecedented magnitude. England's economic structure has been shaken to its foundation, and like the drowning man in the proverb, English capitalists and financiers are clutching at the straw of a coalition government which has no support among the masses.[2] Any day it may have to face the dreaded general elections. What can Gandhi expect from a government which is sitting on a volcano?

Nonetheless, the Round Table Conference is to determine the future consitution of India even under such changed circumstances. A series of proposals may be offered by professors of politics, but whatever proposals are made, they must move within the confines of so-called security and provisos. Even if the agreement provides that these securities and provisos are made purely in the interests of India, the English government will be prudent enough to recall Lord Irwin and put a public servant in his place who has not been involved.[3] A document written by the Bombay government stated clearly and distinctly that the agreement was not legally binding to render it obligatory to the government, and one cannot expect, of course, of a public servant to allow moral objections to stand in the way. The government, in any case, did everything in its power to reverse its steps and to turn the so-called agreement into a farce. As proof, we need only mention the Viceroy's telegram to Gandhi in which he requests Gandhi to come to Simla if he thought that this would remove the difficulties. This alone should have made it clear to everyone that the government did not seriously intend to adhere to the agreement, and it was to be anticipated that the last conference between Gandhi and the Viceroy would be quite useless. Not a single point of his bill of indictment has been accepted by the government. The vague concession in the Bardoli case is more for appearance than a reality.[4] And Bardoli is in no way the eye of the storm of oppression and exploitation.

Gandhi himself had admitted only a week ago that one could not expect anything from the Round Table Conference which had been arranged by the English government only for the purpose of consolidating its position in India, and that it was in no way the intention of the English government to yield as far as to initiate an official investigation into the rupture of the treaty-negotiations. The whole country had already accepted as a fact the collapse of the negotiations and was preparing for a fight. At that moment Gandhi's dramatic departure for Simla upset all calculations by the Congress followers who were extremely irritated by it all. They could not comprehend this fast manoeuvre by the Congress dictator, and before they could rally their thoughts again, he had left India's shores in all haste. We foresaw Gandhi's method of action from the start, and in spite of the sensational collapse of negotiations we were convinced that Gandhi would find a loophole at the end through which he could escape and in this way stage-manage his appearance at the Round Table Conference. No-one, however, could predict that Gandhi would be in such a hurry after the government sent him such an untenable statement. If he were really so keenly interested in participating at the Round Table Conference at any cost, why did he put the country through this nerve-wracking time of uncertainty?

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* Translated from *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 4, No. 21, pp. 245–6, 10 October 1931. SNR

His intention in this matter is not clear to us; it is said that Gandhi only quietly revealed his plans to his companions on board ship, and India finds itself in renewed suspense over the plans of the Mahatma. He is a master of propaganda, and knows how to keep the country in a state of excitement and expectation. That may serve its purpose as long as the people are kept guessing about the justness of his sudden change of front. For the time being he is still carried on the crest of popularity. But he cannot make a fool of the entire country forever. The people have in their sights total independence, and although Gandhi has reduced this aim to the 'essence of independence', all his super-clever tricks will be of no avail if he returns without even a vestige of independence. That the Mahatma will return with empty hands is already clear now. For independence has never been accomplished through negotiations at a round table. British imperialism is determined to move not even an inch from its preconceived plan of securities and provisos, which will keep the way open for imperialist exploitation, and the word of the Mahatma will go unheard among the practical Britons who will deal with him according to merit. They will celebrate him and indulge his belief that they have changed their minds. And the Indian people will realize to their greatest disappointment that Gandhi will have returned with changed views and will ask them to relinquish their fight. For, when all is said and done, the Briton is a 'good chap'.

The masses, however, cannot wait for independence until the Round Table Conference has ended and Gandhi returns with changed views instead of a changed constitution. They cannot wait any longer, because the objective conditions render it impossible for them to lead a humanly dignified existence. The catastrophic price-drop has ruined the peasantry. The work of a whole year has brought them nothing; after one year there they stand, poor and at the brink of death from starvation. The ruthless collection [of rents] and the extortions by the usurers are driving the peasant to rebellion. For him no justice exists. For him there are no ethics in a system which not only robs him of the fruits of his labour but also crushes him with increased burdens. Like a starving animal on a chain there is only one hope and one choice for him: if he wishes to live, he must rebel against the ruling system. He must rise against the exploiting classes and put an end to this economic system. He is not interested in the fine point of distinguishing between the essence of independence and complete independence if he does not gain through it freedom from the extortionist usurers and the great estate owners. For him the latter is the decisive test of independence. The independence that Gandhi may carry with him from the Round Table Conference will not rid him [the peasant] of exploitation, and only through such riddance can he be assured of a humanly dignified life.

The worker is not in any better situation. He suffers under a merciless capitalistic exploitation which strives to beat its competitors in the market on the backs of the workers. The wages of the workers are lowered directly and indirectly. He [the worker] has to work far beyond normal working-hours to earn his sustenance. And if he falls ill due to overwork, he is dismissed and thrown onto the scrap-heap. If he protests and calls on his comrades to fight against exploitation, he is thrown onto the street and his comrades threatened with punishment. And if in spite of this the workers unite to struggle against exploitation, their front is broken up by the capitalists who employ the wiliest and basest means for this purpose. If in defiance of all these attempts to bring discord among them, the workers offer resistance, then they are surrendered to the police who give them the *coup de grâce* [death-blow] and leave their leaders to rot in prison. If the workers try to defend their rights legally, nothing is left untried to drag out matters, to remove the masses from the influence of the fighting leaders. The Meerut trial is proof of the capitalist and political suppression of the workers. The long-standing exploitation undermines the existence of the working-class as a factor in the life of a society. Even the Whitley Commission installed by the capitalist state had to admit that the alarming conditions urgently require a revision of the economic system in order to safeguard the existence of the workers.[5] However, these recommendations do not foresee any radical change. Yet, even if the recommendations of this commission are acted upon, it could bring about a considerable improvement. But in their scandalous avarice the capitalists do not even wish to be held to that. Rendering lip-service to the Congress declaration on the rights of the workers, which is of no value at all (as it is far too vague), the capitalists grasp every opportunity to lower wages and will oppose any attempt at a radical labour legislation. If the labour-leaders are dissatisfied with the Geneva labour-agreement on working-hours etc., the spokesmen of capitalism oppose even the most modest of these modest agreements. They grow upset about European working conditions but they quietly pocket profits which frequently surpass the European ones and they vie with one another to display an ultra-European or American life-style. It is the height of hypocrisy to adopt everything of the European life-style but to condemn only the European working conditions. There is only one just living standard which must be brought to every worker and enable him to live a full and free life. And if the European workers have gained better living conditions after long struggles, is that a reason for condemning their methods as unfitting for India? That is only malicious propaganda by the Indian capitalists in order to create a general prejudice against the demands of workers for raising their living-standards. It is significant that these views and evasions are preached by the Congress people, and that Congress, which pretends to stand for the interests of the workers and peasants, lacks the words to protest against their exploiters. On the other hand, it has aided the government and the large estate owners to collect rents from the starving peasants, and that on the grounds of an agreement reached without the peasants. It has increased the profits of the manufacturers through its boycott-propaganda whilst the workers fought to gain even one full meal per day.

The workers and peasants know quite well after all this that the participation of Congress at the Round Table Conference will not alleviate their lot any more than did the agreement of Delhi. On the other hand, if anything at all is accomplished (which is not to be expected), then it would only consolidate the position of the exploiting class. For the transference of power, even in the form of a complete dominion-constitution on the basis of adult voting rights, will not bring about the least change in the economic conditions of the life of the masses.

One need not indulge in any speculation about the result of the Round Table Conference if one knows that the objective conditions speak against any transference of power. Even if Congress had wished to send a more numerous delegation to secure its absolute demands, it would be a mistaken assumption to think that the voices of this delegation could have been anything other than a lost voice in the wilderness because the Round Table Conference comprises nominated delegates who represent the mighty political reactionaries, the capitalist interests and the feudal landlords. Where then stand the Indian people whose representative Gandhi chose himself to be? One single one amongst hundreds of 'brave Round Table knights', Gandhi, in spite of his 'sole Congress-mandate', will be to the English and their experts no more or less than one amongst many. Congress would like to trick the British warlords with a children's rifle. The result must disappoint all those who, even after the last dramatic collapse of all the negotiations and treaty-manoeuvres, still believed in the Round Table Conference.

One way is still open to Congress to maintain its position. This way has not been indicated by the will of Congress or by Gandhi but by the crisis which is rapidly coming to a head in the entire English economic life. English politicians under the leadership of the 'socialist' MacDonald abandoned the interests of the English masses, especially the working class, when they agreed to a general reduction of unemployment benefits. That has aroused the fighting spirit of the workers, and the Trade Union Congress has picked up the challenge and the whole parliamentary Labour Party, after exclusion of their treacherous leaders 'Mac', Thomas and Snowden, took up the fight against the reduction of the social achievements which was ordered by the American and English financiers. In view of the economic situation of the country and the condition of the working-class in England and related problems, we should not be surprised if a socialist revolution occurred. Here Gandhi finds a welcome opportunity to carry out the fight for the Indian masses. He should place himself at the head of the English workers and exploit the situation for ourselves. Here a rare opportunity is offering itself to the great agitator. But will he fulfil our expectations? Or will non-violence and loyalty prevent him? Will the sole Congress delegate to the Round Table Conference hesitate to overstep the boundaries placed upon the 'honoured guest' and thus miss the only opportunity to remedy all his fateful mistakes?

How great is our need just now of a leader on whom we could rely and who genuinely represented the interests of the Indian masses! We would not have hesitated for a moment to exploit every situation to serve the interests of the country. We realize that all hope that Gandhi could make good his mistakes is an illusion. The honorary member of the Indian Chamber of Commerce cannot deny his class. He may reject forever the reproach that he does not represent the interests of the workers and peasants; but with each of his actions (regardless of any sentimental expressions of sympathy) he betrays his own class-spirit. Indeed, the entire notion of non-violence and loyalty, of which he has made a fetish, are characteristic of that class which lives comfortably in idleness, which fancies itself above the exploited masses and which wallows in spiritual sentimentalities out of the abundance of its wealth. Given such a mentality one cannot expect that Gandhi himself would grasp the most available opportunity for a real fight for real independence of the masses. A smile from Simla arouses in him thousandfold more expectations than the war-cry of the oppressed masses.[6]

Notes

[1] Although there were many breaches of the Gandhi–Irwin Pact and the Government did not make any concessions or commitments, Gandhi sailed on 29 August 1931 to attend the Second Round Table Conference (Sept.–Dec.) in London. He returned empty-handed on 28 December and resumed Civil Disobedience in January 1932. But 'the movement . . . collapsed long before it was officially discontinued by Congress in May 1934'. B. N. Pandey, *The Break-up of British India*, London, 1969, pp. 134–6.

[2] The great economic depression brought about the fall of the Labour Government which was replaced by a 'National' Government in which Ramsay MacDonald was Prime Minister but the Secretary of State for India was Sir Samuel Hoare.

[3] Lord Irwin (1926–31) was followed by the Earl of Willingdon (1931–6) as Governor-General and Viceroy.

[4] During June, July and August 1931 there occurred a plentiful exchange of correspondence and telegrams between Gandhi and H. W. Emerson, Home Secretary to the Government of India. Gandhi submitted to the Government a list of what he considered to be breaches of the Delhi Pact on the part of the latter. To these charges the Government published its answers on 24 August. Gandhi then went and met the Viceroy and an agreement was reached on 27 August that Gandhi would attend the R.T.C. in London. Other than agreeing to hold an inquiry into the 'alleged police excesses in Bardoli in connection with tax collection', the government made no concession. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Congress*, pp. 794–827.

[5] *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India*, cmd. 3883, London, 1931. The Commission was appointed in July 1929 under the chairmanship of John H. Whitley. It produced a highly informative report in eleven volumes. The 12 September 1931 issue of *Gegen den Strom* (IV, 19, pp. 221–3) published a critical article entitled 'The Whitley-Report on the Condition of Indian Workers' (Der Whitley-Bericht uber die Lage der Indischen Arbeiter) written by Roy under the assumed name S. K. Vidyarthi. It has not been included in the present selection.

[6] According to an introductory editorial note in *Gegen den Strom* this article 'by Comrade M. N. Roy appeared in the first issue of a new weekly journal *Independent India'* from which it was translated into German. It has been retranslated into English for this volume. The journal was the organ of the League of Indian Independence formed by the Royist group in Bombay; its editor was Charles Mascarenhas. This article was probably written in Kanpur jail and smuggled out from there. After a while the journal was suspended. After Roy's release from prison, *Independent India* was revived as a weekly (4 April 1937) under Roy's editorship.
M. N. Roy, 'Some Reminiscences', *Independent India*, Vol. IX, No. 13, 1945. I have not succeeded in tracing copies of the 1931 *Independent India*. SNR.

SELECTED WORKS

1932

22. My Defence

Introductory editorial note

This is the statement which Roy was not allowed to make in his own defence at the Sessions Court where his trial lasted from 3 November 1931 to 7 January 1932. The trial took place inside the Kanpur (Cawnpore) jail where Roy had been brought from Bombay in the first week of August and confined since then. Roy refused to be tried by a court sitting inside the prison compound, but he was manacled and forcibly brought to his trial by the jail Superintendent and four non-Bengali wardens (*Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 4 November 1931). Jawaharlal Nehru sought permission several times to see Roy in prison, but this was not allowed by the jail authority (*Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol V, New Delhi, 1973, p. 327).

Roy had been arrested on 21 July 1931 on the strength of a warrant issued on 10 May 1924 at the time of the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case. In that case he was the principal accused, but at that time he was out of the government's reach. The warrant was issued on the instruction of the India Office which proposed to 'secure his arrest (if he visited this country, i.e. England) and despatch him to India under the Fugitive Offenders Act of 1881' (Home-Pol., F 176, 1924). It was issued by the district magistrate and made over to Colonel Cecil Kaye, at that time Director of Central Intelligence Bureau. At Roy's trial in 1931 Kaye was the principal prosecution witness.

Roy returned to India knowing full well the risks involved. In the course of seven months between his clandestine arrival with a false passport in Bombay on 17 December 1930 and his arrest, he travelled over 2,000 kilometres in Northern and Western India, helping organization of peasant movements in the United Provinces and the Punjab, training his followers in efficient and dynamic trade union work in Bombay, resuming publication of his organ *The Masses* and starting a new periodical *Independent India*, writing a large number of political tracts and articles under assumed names, attending the session of the Congress at Karachi, banding his followers in the League of Indian Independence, and inspiring them to form local committees of the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class (H. Williamson, *India and Communism*). This early group of followers known as the Royists included, besides Tayab Shaikh, Sunder Kabadi, Brajesh Singh, Anadi Bhaduri and J. K. Banerji who had been recruited by him in Europe, A. N. Shetty, M. R. Shetty, Maniben Kara, V. B. Karnik, C. Y. Chitnis, Charles Mascarenhas and Rajani Mukherji. In July, shortly before Roy's arrest, the Royists and their friendly associates gained control of the All-India Trade Union Congress.

But all the time the police were hot on his heels. Not only in the Kanpur Case, but also in the earlier Peshawar Cases (1922/1923/1924/

1927) and the Meerut Case, Roy was the key figure of 'the Bolshevik Conspiracy to deprive the British King of his sovereignty over India'. And as was revealed during his trial, the government's memory of his revolutionary activities during the period prior to his secret departure from India in 1915 had not faded at all with the passage of time. These revelations were part of the evidence given by prosecution witnesses who were mostly officials and employees of the Intelligence Department. Roy's arrest and trial were extensively reported in such English and vernacular dailies as *The Statesman, Amrita Bazar Patrika* and *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, from 22 July 1931 to 10 January 1932.

Roy had most of the time to be 'on the run', and several times he narrowly escaped capture by the police. 'Seldom had the police of India ever strained and worked so feverishly to get a "wanted man" as they have in the case of Roy . . . Seldom since his arrival did he sleep twice in the same place without making absolutely certain of the safety of doing so . . . he visited over two dozen cities in India and dodged the police of the district in each case.' (*The Statesman*, 23 July 1931).

It is, I think, worth noting that although his presence at the Karachi session was known to several top leaders of the Congress to some of whom he was introduced by his assumed name, Dr. Mahmood, all of them conscientiously kept the secret to themselves. Two events, however, helped the police. The poet Harindranath Chattopadhyay, brother of Roy's rival Virendranath Chattopadhyay of Berlin, had known Roy in Moscow. One evening he came to the flat of V. B. Karnik in Bombay where Roy also happened to be present. He immediately recognized Roy, and the following day or so he mentioned this to his sister Suhasini who was actively connected with the official Communist Party. Roy's presence in Bombay thus came to be widely known, particularly since the official Communists were very keen on his removal from the political scene (V. B. Karnik in *The Radical Humanist*, Sep. 1973). Roy then moved to the United Provinces, but his new operational base was Bombay, and when he returned there the second event hastened his discovery. Louise Geissler, Roy's constant companion in Berlin since his trip to China, arrived in Bombay on 1 July hoping to be of assistance to him in his work. But her close association with Roy was well-known to the Intelligence Branch, and from the time of her arrival she was placed under close observation. The situation was mentioned by Roy in a letter (unpublished) to Ellen Gottschalk on 3 July 1931. Louise had a couple of secret meetings with Roy arranged by Maniban Kara and other friends. (A detailed first hand account of Louise's arrival in Bombay and her brief clandestine meetings with Roy is given by the famous actress Lila Chitnis in her memoirs *Chanderi Duniyeto*, written in Marathi and published from Pune. Lila came to know Roy and Louise through her Royist husband, Dr Chitnis). Louise then went to Lucknow where she was arrested on 24 July and quickly deported from India (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 August 1931).

Meantime the house of A. G. Pandit in Wylie Road, Byculla, Bombay, where Roy was provided temporary shelter, had been placed under police surveillance. On 21 July at 5 a.m. the Police Commissioner G. S. Wilson and the Deputy Commissioner in charge of the CID at Bombay Kavasji Jamshedji Petigara entered the room where Roy was asleep and arrested him. He was wearing shorts and a khaki shirt, and offered no resistance. He was taken from Bombay to Kanpur where committal proceedings opened on 7 August. He was charged under Section 121A of the Indian Penal Code. Roy decided to prepare his own defence, and wrote from jail to S. Mukunda Lall (Mukunda Lal Sircar), General-Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress (and at that time, a follower of Roy) requesting him to send a set of books which he required for this purpose. The list, as published along with the letter in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 19 August 1931, was as follows:

> Bagehot, *Lombard Street and the British Constitution*; Bentham, *Fragment on Government*, and *Principles of Morals and Legislation*; Dicey, *The British Constitution*; Austin, *Jurisprudence*; Blackstone, *Commentaries on English Law*; Jethro Brown, *Austinian Theory of Law*; Hume, *Philosophical Works and Treatises*; Locke, *Civil Government*; Hobbes, *Leviathan*; Beccaria, *Crime and Punishment*; Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*; Halevy, *Philosophical Radicalism*; Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England*; Greene, *The History of England*; Everyman's Library edition—*Political Thought in England* (series of several books.).

Roy knew that 'the evidence of foreign and frankly revolutionary authorities' would not carry any weight with an English judge. He, therefore, deliberately built his defence on the views of some of the best political philosophers and jurists of the west who were recognized as authorities by the British themselves. Reading his *Defence* one is struck by the remarkable breadth of his acquaintance with the writings of the major western thinkers, rather unusual for a full-fledged Marxist who had an extraordinarily active political life since the age of eighteen.

Roy's trial opened on 31 August before Lewis Lloyd, Joint Magistrate, Kanpur. A Roy Defence Committee was formed in September with Brajesh Singh and Harihar Nath Sastri as joint secretaries. Several applications made by Roy for grant of bail, for transfer of his case to some other court, for permission to meet the Meerut 'conspirators', for permission to address the court, were rejected. The chief prosecution witness, Cecil Kaye, supported his evidence by referring to the mass exhibits produced at the time of the Kanpur Case. On 4 September, Dr Abdul Hossain Mansur of the Aligarh Muslim University appeared as a prosecution witness. A revolutionary nationalist during the first world war, Mansur had known Roy in Moscow in 1921–2. He was arrested there on suspicion of being a British spy by the all-powerful Cheka in 1922. His wife appealed to Roy for help, and the latter intervened and obtained permission from the Soviet government for Dr Mansur to leave the Soviet Union. Subsequently, Mansur returned to India and was appointed a professor at AMU. Roy had once saved Mansur's life from the deadly grasp of the Cheka. Mansur repaid this humane act by becoming a prosecution witness and by identifying the man on trial as M. N. Roy (*The Statesman*, 5 Sept. 1931; detailed report of cross-examination of Mansur by Roy, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 6 Sept. 1931).

On 15 October Roy was committed to the Sessions Court. The trial started on 3 November inside the jail; as has already been mentioned, Roy was brought to the trial from his cell by physical force. He applied for trial by jury but this was refused. But the assessors, who were appointed, did not know English; and hearing was postponed till 12 November. On 13 November the prosecution lawyer opened his case by speaking at first in Urdu for the benefit of the assessors and then by translating his statement into English. Cecil Kaye was again chief prosecution witness. On 4 December, Roy applied to the court to summon as defence witnesses Sir C. V. Raman, Jawaharlal Nehru, Srinivas Iyengar, N. M. Joshi, Prof. Brijnarain and K. F. Nariman. On 9 December, Roy described his trial as 'a farce' (*The Statesman*, 11 December 1931). There were no defence witnesses and he was not allowed to make his Defence Statement (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11 December). On 16 December after the Prosecution Counsel had concluded his final submission, the assessors were found to be divided in their view. Assessors Bhogilal and Suryaprasad found the accused not guilty while Wazid Ali and Sheoprasad found him guilty. The trial ended on 7 January and on 9 January Roy 'was sentenced to transportation for 12 years for conspiracy to wage war against the King Emperor'. On the same night he was removed under strong police guard from Kanpur to the Central jail at Bareilly (*Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 14 January 1932).

Roy had already prepared the draft of his defence statement in October–November, but it took him some time before the final copy could be smuggled out of jail. He managed to make allies in every prison who acted as 'the channels of his secret traffic' with the world outside (Ellen Roy in *The Radical Humanist*, 14 November. 1954). The statement, of course, could not be openly printed or published in British India. The full text was published by the Committee of Action for Independence and printed by the Vanguard Press, Pondicherry, in January 1932. It was entitled *My Defence*, priced one rupee and four annas, and consisted of 114 pages of text plus a Foreword (wrongly printed Fore Ward) of 13 pages by one Aswani (*sic*) Kumar Sharma. Simultaneously an abridged version was published by the Roy Defence Committee of India, New York Office, 228 Second Avenue, under the title *I Accuse*, also with the same Sharma's foreword (pp. 30; price 10 cents). It is the complete Pondicherry version without the foreword which is reproduced here.

An appeal against the shocking verdict of the Sessions judge was filed in the Allahabad High Court. Roy wanted to conduct the defence himself, but eventually agreed to have a lawyer. At the very last moment Dr Kailash Nath Katju was persuaded to defend him in the High Court. On 2 May 1933 Mr Justice J. Thom dismissed Roy's appeal, but reduced the sentence to six years' rigorous imprisonment. In his verdict he stated that 'the doctrines of political philosophers' or 'the theories sound or unsound of constitutional law . . . avail nothing against the provisions of the Indian Penal Code'. In deciding the punishment he claimed to have taken 'into consideration that he [Roy] was the leader amongst the conspirators: his was the moving spirit and the master mind' ('M. N. Roy, V. Emperor: Judgement' in S. N. Ray (ed.), *M. N. Ray: Philosopher–Revolutionary*, Calcutta, 1984, pp. 143–4).

Roy wanted his case to be placed before the Privy Council, and his lawyer, Dr Katju, who was going to London in May, too with him all the papers of the Roy Case. Fenner Brockway, H. N. Brailsford and Stafford Cripps were approached, but Cripps advised against the Appeal and the idea was dropped (Letters from jail to Ellen Gottschalk, of 19 June and 23 August 1934). Roy was not released until 20 November 1936.

Among the topmost leaders of the Congress virtually the only person who took a consistent interest in Roy's case was Jawaharlal Nehru. He had met Roy in 1927 during his brief visit to the Soviet Union and had been impressed. When Roy returned clandestinely to India he met Nehru again, and at his invitation he went incognito to Karachi. Shortly after Roy's arrest when a Defence Committee was set up, Nehru become a member. A cable had been sent also to Gandhi on 27 August, but the latter did not respond to it (*Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 28 Aug. 1931). Gandhi sailed on 29 August to participate in the Round Table Conference in London. Nehru tried to raise funds for Roy's Defence; he also appealed to the government to treat the prisoner with every courtesy. On 17 September 1931 he wrote to Roger Baldwin in New York and Geneva requesting him to 'draw public attention to the case' and to send money which he (Nehru) would 'hand over to the defence committee'. On 18 September he wrote to S. B. Patel, Secretary, Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, to send monetary contributions to Jawaharlal Rohatgi who was in charge of the Roy Defence Committee in Kanpur. On 16 October he wrote to Chief Secretary, U. P. Government, Kunwar Jagadish Prasad, complaining about Roy's trial inside the jail and harassments inflicted on Roy by the jail authorities. 'Roy is a man of ability and note who has held a very high position and who has an international reputation . . . But he is not given the facilities given to ordinary undertrials'. On 9 November *The Bombay Chronicle* published his statement in which he wrote, *inter alia*: 'whether one agrees with him [Roy] or not, one has to recognize his great ability and his great sacrifice for India's freedom. I admire Mr Roy for this . . . The treatment he is receiving in the jail is very bad . . . It is shameful that government should treat a great opponent in this way.' On 27 November he wrote to K. F. Nariman requesting him to add another Rs 200 to the Rs 1300 which the latter had already sent to the Roy Defence Committee at Kanpur. When Nehru was himself imprisoned he noted in his prison diary (8 Feb. 1932) that on his way to Bareilly he 'wondered if I would meet M. N. Roy who was also in some jail in Bareilly. On arrival I learnt that he was in Central jail. I am in the District'. Later, when Nehru was transferred to Dehradun jail, he felt anguished by the thought that Roy's condition in Bareilly was much worse. He wrote in his prison diary (4 June 1933): 'I often think of M. N. Roy. The poor chap is so lonely in the world with hardly any one to give a thought to him . . . with incipient T. B. he lies in Bareilly Central Prison in this heat, probably in solitary confinement.' (All the details in this paragraph are from *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 5, 1973.)

My Defence, besides being a vindication of the inalienable human right to revolt against oppression and injustice, also provides a summary statement of Roy's political position and programme as they were in 1931. However, neither the Pondicherry nor the New York version of Roy's *Defence* had the benefit of careful proof correction or competent editing at the time of the 1932 publication. Some words or phrases might have been missing or illegible in the very text which had been smuggled out of jail. In any case both versions were replete with printing errors and omissions; there were also verbal and syntactical obscurities. I have made a few corrections where the errors were obvious and could be removed without any interference with the structure or meaning of the text, but otherwise I have followed quite closely the Pondicherry version. Despite the shortcomings of the 1932 editions, the meaning of the text or its argument is, on the whole, clear enough.

Roy's five years and four months in four different jails, highly restrictive and physically damaging as they were, nevertheless were intellectually very productive. His jail manuscripts running to several thousand pages, now preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, bear witness to the astonishing range of his intellectual interests and unshakeable commitment to freedom and social justice. The next volume of Selected Works will comprise some of his significant writings of this prison period.

SNR.

My Defence

Manabendra Nath Roy

The Statement that I was not allowed to make
at the Sessions Court

Cawnpore (UP)
M. N. Roy

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My Defence

'The statement which I was not allowed to make in the
sessions court, Cawnpore U.P.'

M. N. Roy

Introduction

As I have been able to gather the sum and substance of the evidence against me is

1. That I have advocated the right of the Indian people to be free of the present foreign domination,
2. That I have tried to organize a political party with the object of asserting this right,
3. That I have held that India cannot be really free unless separated from the British Empire,
4. That I have advocated application of force as the means for attaining the goal of National Freedom and,
5. That in all this I have acted as the agent of the Communist International.

The documents filed in this court to give evidence against me roughly fall in three categories, namely

1. Books, pamphlets and periodical publications,
2. Public documents (not in the official sense) such as Manifestos, party programme etc. These again are of two kinds, some are ascribed to me personally, and others to the Communist International and,
3. Private correspondence.

The essence of the evidence against me is contained in the first two groups of documents. The object of the third group is to prove the alleged conspiracy formed for the commission of the offence of depriving the king of his sovereignty in India. I shall explain that what is proved by the first two groups of documents is no offence. When that is done, very little need be said about the third group which is of secondary importance.

The documents in the first two groups are all of similar nature. The same idea runs through them all. Therefore, I shall not take the time of the court in explaining them separately. I shall take them in a lump and explain their substance. I may indicate which documents will be covered by this part of my explanation. They are exhibits 7C, 9A, 13, 19, IB, D, 48, and 49. At the same time I shall also explain the documents ascribed to the Communist International namely, exhs. 1,2,3,9 and 15. But I shall give special explanation about my connection with the Communist International. I shall explain the state of things which immediately or otherwise occasioned or caused me to commit the acts I am alleged to have committed according to the documents produced. I shall also explain the state of things under which the facts happened and which afforded the opportunity for the occurrence of the acts which the prosecution seeks to prove to have been committed by me.

The point I want to make first is that the evidence does not prove conspiracy. Exhs. 13 is, so to say, the *piece de resistance* of the prosecution case. It is a memorandum written for a projected conference for the organization of the working class party of India. I am alleged to be the author of this document. By its very nature this document is a comprehensive statement of the aims and objects and the programme and policy of the proposed party. This memorandum is alleged to have been drawn up for a projected conference to which all the persons directly or indirectly connected with the alleged conspiracy were to be present. It was the conference called by Sumshuddin Hasan and Gulam Hussein (the latter being actually one of the eight persons against whom the complaint was lodged in 1924), through a circular issued to a number of persons. The circular is exhibit 14. I must read our some extracts from the document because this basic piece of evidence has not been read out to the assessors and as far as I know has neither been made otherwise available to them. The following passages occurred in the memorandum to a conference which the prosecution alleges was called as an act in furtherance of the conspiracy.

> Now we must adopt a programme of action, a programme which will rally the working class in the present struggle against foreign domination and prepare them for the future struggle. But the programme of action presupposes the definition of the object for the realization of which the action is taken, or, in other words, while talking of the immediate interests of the workers and peasants, we should not exclude the big issue from our programme. This tendency, nevertheless, is noticeable in many comrades who are eager to organize the working class into an independent political party. The first and foremost problem that every political party in India must face and solve, is the problem of national liberation. The fate of every party depends upon its ability to find a solution of these problems. To bring economic relief to the producing classes which appear to be the aim of many of our comrades present over here, cannot be a programme of a political party which fails to declare that this aim is unrealizable within the

> framework of imperialist domination. Therefore the mere formulation of this aim obliges us to challenge the political domination of the Indian people by a foreign power. It does not make any difference if this domination will be externally readjusted to the demands of the native upper classes in order to secure their services for the joint-exploitation of the workers and peasants. Our party which stands for the liberation of the producing classes from all sorts of exploitation, cannot leave the question of national liberation out of its programme; because national liberation, that is, the release of all the forces of social production is a first step towards the ultimate realization of our programme, which is the end of class domination. Some of the comrades may argue, in fact, this argument has already been heard that we should leave aside the question of national freedom, since it hardly concerns the working class in the present state of consciousness but will unnecessarily bring the wrath of the Government upon our party. This is a very vulgar way of looking at the situation. Firstly, if it is proved that the working class fails to show any conscious interest in the question of national liberation, then more necessary does it become for our party to take up the question in right earnest in order to show to the working class how vitally they are concerned with it. Secondly, it is idle to think that our party can escape the wrath of the government if it is really what it is meant to be. We cannot fight for the economic interests of the producing masses without at once threatening the power and position of those classes that thrive on unearned income; and no sooner the slightest indication of this threat is noticed than the forces of the state will begin to move with the object of crushing those from whom comes the threat. Therefore there is only one way of avoiding the hostility of the government. It is the way of reformism. If the object of our party is to alleviate the suffering of the toiling classes with aid and sanction of the bourgeoisie then we may expect to be left unmolested. But is it worth the trouble to organize a new party with this object? Any efforts made with this object will only be gilding the chains of bondage. The economic freedom of the producing classes can be conquered only through a revolutionary struggle from the beginning to the end. This should be clearly set forth in our programme. A few ambiguous generalities will not take us very much further than the reformist and Utopian Slogans of the Nationalists.

Then criticizing the slogan of 'Labour Swaraj', advocated by some members of the alleged conspiracy, Dange being one of them, it argues: 'What is meant by Labour Swaraj? How can we talk of Labour Swaraj, when the very question of Swaraj means that national independence remains unsolved? . . . Therefore our slogan should not be a vague Labour Swaraj which cannot be realized for a long time yet, but a democratic government based on universal suffrage.'

I have quoted only extracts from the memorandum but I earnestly request the court and the assessors to read paras 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the document exh. 13 which also bear out my contention that until June 1923 at any rate, when the memorandum was written, there did not exist among the alleged conspirators an agreement to commit an act which might constitute the alleged conspiracy.

The object of this long discussion of the question of National freedom is obvious. Evidently there was no agreement amongst the constituents of the conference regarding the prior importance of the question of national freedom and separation of India from the British Empire. The writer of the memorandum was convinced of the priority of the question and desired to bring the conference round to his point of view. Had there been agreement on this question, such a lengthy treatment of it would not be necessary. Sentences and extracts quoted show that many members of the proposed conference had actually expressed their disagreement with the point of the author of the memorandum regarding the question of national freedom.

The memorandum was written on 5 June 1923. So on the showing of the prosecution evidence itself, until then, there was no agreement amongst the members of the alleged conspiracy; not even the agreement of the nature which in any case would not amount to conspiracy unless some act in pursuance thereof were committed. There is no proof that the proposed conference met and agreed upon the point of view of the writer of the memorandum. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, there can be two assumptions: either the conference did not meet at all and consequently the agreement was never reached, or it did meet and did not come to the agreement.

Then exh. 62 X in the 1924 case is the translation of an article by S. A. Dange published on 5 July 1923. In this article Dange categorically expresses his disagreement with the views of M. N. Roy. So very suspicious was Dange of the views of Roy that he goes to the extent of making insinuations about the object of Roy's activities. A fellow conspirator would hardly do that. Dange wrote:

> A Conference of all the communists in the world was held in Moscow in November 1922, the representatives of all the communist and socialist parties all the world over and affiliated to the central body were present at that conference. There is no such party in India as yet. Mr M. N. Roy sent a friend of his to me hoping that I may be available to act according to the dictation of this [Moscow Central Communist Party] party as I was a socialist, though all the time he knew that there was no such party here . . . but as I was not ready to work under a party in a distant country, I told him [that is, the friend of M. N. Roy] that I was not ready to present myself at the Congress [communist]. I told him that Indian politics differed vastly from the European . . . the goal of the socialist party of India [the party that Dange was trying to organize] is one of an open and straightforward nature . . . to take away the means of production of food and raiment from the hands of the profiteers and to confide them into the hands of the society is the minimum goal of the socialist party. We do not feel the necessity of Bolshevic gold or the help of their agents to convince

> the people about the necessity of this goal. The propaganda of this party [that is Dange's socialist party] is as open as that of the non-cooperation party.

This clearly proves that between Dange and Roy there was until 5 July 1923 absolutely no agreement amounting to conspiracy. It is a matter of commonsense that no agreement should have possibly been reached very soon after such a hostile attitude on the part of one. Then, the prosecution does not prove that the agreement was ever reached within the period covered by the case.

The prosecution evidence also proves Dange's disagreement with the other members of the alleged conspiracy. In a letter to one Habib (exh. 25), dated 10 March 1923 alleged by the prosecution to be really meant for Usmani, he wrote: ' I should like to tell you that I have no hesitation in being open either to comrades or to the Government. Openness is difficult to be dealt with in many respects.' By this Dange proves himself not to be in agreement with any conspiratorial activities. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that Dange's article disproves the prosecution allegation that the persons against whom the complaint was lodged in 1924 were engaged in the act of establishing in India a branch of the Communist International, ever since 1921. In the absence of positive evidence about the agreement among the other members of the alleged conspiracy it should be assumed that there was no agreement.

The prosecution has produced a large number of letters in original and copies which are alleged to have been written by the members of the conspiracy. But these letters do not prove the agreement to commit the offence of depriving the king of his sovereignty of India, nor do they prove the commission of some act in pursuance of some such agreement as by itself will amount to conspiracy. These letters prove certain propagandist and organizational activities on the part of certain individuals, but these activities cannot be considered to be an action in pursuance of the conspiracy as long as the agreement constituting the conspiracy is not proved. There were activities for the organization of a workers and peasants party about the object of which there was no common agreement.

I shall not take the time of the court in reading of the letters but I earnestly hope that the judge and the assessors will keep my contention in view while examining them.

While pleading to the charge at the beginning of the trail I stated that I was not guilty of conspiracy to deprive the king of his sovereignty of India. The evidence in support of the charge has not proved that I have committed the offence of conspiracy. Section 121A, IPC, defines criminal conspiracy. According to it 'no agreement except an agreement to commit an offence shall amount to criminal conspiracy; besides the agreement is done by one or more parties to such agreement in pursuance thereof'. For proving the offence of conspiracy it is essential to prove agreement amongst the members of the alleged conspiracy as regards the objects thereof and the agreement must clearly be an agreement for committing an offence. In case the agreement is not clearly an agreement for committing the offence, mere agreement shall not prove conspiracy unless some act is committed in pursuance of the agreement.

No evidence whatsoever has been produced to prove that in the years 1921–4 there was any agreement amongst the alleged conspirators to deprive the king of his sovereignty of India, that is to commit what is an offence according to the established law. The evidence has been produced proving that I made propaganda in favour of complete National Freedom of the Indian people and maintained that complete National Freedom of India meant her separation from the British Empire.

The prosecution case is that this propaganda implied that I had the intention of depriving the King of the sovereignty of India. But this is only an inference. Strictly according to the letters of the law, that is the definition of criminal conspiracy under section 121A, IPC, agreement on the object of national freedom and separation of India from the British Empire shall not constitute a conspiracy. Agreement on such an object, being not an agreement to commit an offence, shall not amount to criminal conspiracy, unless some act is committed, according to the agreement. The prosecution evidence does not prove that any such act was committed by any member of the alleged conspiracy.

As a matter of fact, in the period covered by the charge, that is 1921–4, there did not exist amongst the alleged conspirators, even such an agreement as shall amount to conspiracy in the absence of any act done in pursuance of the agreement. The absence of even such agreement is proved by documents exhibited by the prosecution in support of its case. I have quoted from several exhibits in order to prove my contention.

The prosecution evidence might be taken to have proved certain intention on the part of one or more individuals. On my part the intention is clear. But according to Justice Brampton in th case of Queen Vs. Leatham (1901), 'A mere intention will not suffice to constitute the crime of conspiracy'. And Justice Willes in the case of Mullcahy Vs. Queen held, 'A conspiracy consists not merely in the intention of two or more to do an unlawful act or to do a lawful act by unlawful means. So long as such a design rests in the intention only it is not indictable.'

Summarizing this point I say that in the period covered by the charge against me there was no agreement among the members of the alleged conspiracy regarding the offence nor was any act committed in pursuance of an agreement. So there was no conspiracy. The charge is not proved.

The agreement on the part of the alleged conspirators is assumed on the strength of the mere assertion of the prosecution. It is that the alleged conspiracy was a branch of the Communist International established by the latter's decision and functioning under its guidance and control. But the allegations made in paras 3, 5, 7, and 11 of the complaint are not proved by the evidence produced. On the contrary, the documents on record prove that during the period covered by this case there did not exist any branch of the Communist International in India nor did the alleged conspirators in India have any agreement with the objects of the CI nor any organized relation with it. I shall again quote from the same document, namely exh. 13.

In making the suggestion that the projected party should have a foreign Bureau to be composed of several Indians abroad, the memorandum defines the function of the proposed Bureau. 'It will act as the representative and serve as the connecting link with the Communist International to which the party will eventually be affiliated.' So, until June 1923 there did not exist any branch of the Communist International in India, nor was the projected party to be organized definitely as such a branch. Upon its formation the party was to keep some sort of second hand connection with the Communist International. The question of affiliation, that is the projected party ever becoming an integral part of the CI, was to be left open indefinitely. This clearly does not bear out the allegation made in paras 5 and 7 of the complaint.

The would-be relation of the projected party is very clearly defined further down in the same document under the heading 'International Affiliation'. 'The only international proletarian organization that stands unconditionally for the freedom of the subject peoples and liberation of the working masses from class domination is the Communist International. Of course, only a Central Party subscribing fully to the programme of the Communist International can be formally affiliated to that body. But pending the full development of the socio-political character of our party we can maintain relation with the Communist International as a fraternal party.'

Then the writer suggests in the same connection that a delegation from the projected party, presumably upon its foundation, should visit the headquarter of the Communist International 'to determine what could be the relation of our party with the Communist International and how these relations will be maintained'.

These passages make three points. First, the projected party was not to be a central party and therefore the object of its promoters was not to establish a branch of the Communist International in India. Second, the eventual relation of the projected party with the CI would be only fraternal, and, third, it was for the projected party to decide what sort of relation it would have with the Communist International and how the eventual relation should be maintained.

This does not appear at all like the establishing of a branch organization of the Communist International under its command and subordinated to its absolute control. What was attempted was to organize a party of the Indian workers and peasants by the Indians themselves according to the necessity arising out of the objective condition itself. Being the party of the working class the party, when formed, would establish relation with the international working class organization which sympathized with its aims and objects and was likely to help it in the struggle for the realization of the same aims and objects. If it is not an offence for the government of India to send delegates to the League of Nations or the so-called Labour Representatives to the so-called International Labour conferences at Geneva, it cannot be conspiratorial act on the part of the Indian working class to establish relations with a similar International body.

The allegation made in para 11 of the complaint has not been proved at all. The evidence regarding Shaukat Usmani receiving £ 25 from me appears to be very shady. In any case there is not the least shadow of proof that the money came from the Communist International. The evidence about the money receipt by the prosecution witness Kiran Bihari Roy is still shadier. There is no proof whatsoever that the money was intended for Nalini Gupta and still less proved that it came from me. There are some references to money remittances in what is produced as the correspondence between Muzaffar Ahmed and myself. But again there is absolutely no proof that the money thus referred to came from the Communist International.

Further, there is no evidence that a delegation from any workers' and peasants' party of India ever visited the Head quarters of the Communist International and established any sort of relation with the same. In the absence of any proof that a branch of the Communist International was actually established in India the whole evidence of the prosecution becomes mere allegations, assertions and suppositions.

I have not been allowed the facilities to secure the publications of the Communist International although some of these are produced as evidence against me.

These publications are proscribed in India. So, I could not secure them without the special permission which has been refused to me by this as well as the Lower Court. Had I been allowed to secure these publications I would have more categorically refuted the allegations about the Communist International and its part in the attempt to organize a 'workers' and peasants' party' in India. Now I can only bring it to the notice of the Court that according to the official record of the Communist International, a branch of it did not exist in this country even in 1928.

This is proved by the report of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International held in Summer in 1928. The report is on the record of the Meerut Conspiracy Case. The Court may find the way of referring to it if it so pleases.

The document proving any direct relation between the CI and the projected Workers' and Peasants' Party of India is a communication of the former to the conference which was planned for the inauguration of the party (exh. 15). The document contains a criticism of Imperialism which may not be agreeable to the British Government of India. But the criticism was based upon facts which cannot be disputed. I shall show this later on. In any case the criticism does not by itself constitute any offence punishable even by the established laws of the imperialist government. The document further contained an analysis of the social forces involved in the struggle for national freedom. One may not agree with this analysis, but even the most far-fetched construction and interpretation of the very sweeping and elastic section of the Indian Penal Code dealing with the offences against the state cannot declare such an analysis to be punishable.

The document also criticizes the policy of the nationalist movement. This again is a matter of opinion. In any case, should there be any dispute on this question, that would be between the parties concerned. It would be for the Indian nationalist leaders to charge the Communist International in any way they please. But the British King is not involved in this dispute.

This document does not prove in any way that the Communist International fomented a conspiracy with the object of overthrowing the King's sovereignty by means of violent revolution. The sentence occurring in the document—'the struggle for national freedom is a revolutionary struggle'—cannot be interpreted as inciting to violence. It is a simple statement, and a statement of objective fact. Later on I shall explain the objective truthfulness of this statement. Further down in the document occurs the sentence—'the workers and peasants are vitally concerned with the destruction of imperialism and therefore must cooperate, help and participate in every political movement directed against imperialism'. In this sentence the prosecution obviously read what is necessary for their purpose. But read it impartially without any preconceived idea, the sentence appears simply to state an objective situation, and to draw the logical inference therefrom. The fact that the statement is made in the form of a suggestion to the conference does not alter the objective nature of this statement and the logic of the inference.

The allegation made in the paragraph 8 of the complaint is presumably based upon the following passage in this document.

> But the revolutionary energy of the masses cannot be evoked to the fullest might under a programme which neglects altogether the interest of the working class. It can only be done through the efforts of a party which will stand clearly on the ground of class interest of the wage earners and the poor peasantry. To formulate such a programme is the task of the first conference of the party you have undertaken to organize.

The person, law or Government is still to be found who would openly condemn and penalize the act of formulating a programme for the economic betterment of the masses. Whether the programme can be realized by peaceful means and with the sanction of the established laws, or application of violence will be necessary for the purpose does not depend on the advocates of the programme, but upon the attitude of the established order.

The following passage occurred in the judgement (1924 Case):

> That the Conspiracy . . . was fomented (and probably originated) by the Communist International through its agent, Roy, for the purpose of depriving the King-Emperor of the Sovereignty of British India by means of a violent revolution.

The evidence against me is the same as, according to the judgement in 1924 case, failed in that case to prove the actual establishment of a conspiracy. The judge used the term '*fomented*' as against '*established*'. So at the utmost there was only an attempt to conspire to commit the offence penalizable by Section 121A, IPC. The prosecution alleges that I was a member of a conspiracy *established* with the object of depriving the King of his sovereignty in India and that the alleged conspiracy was established under the control and direction of the Communist International. According to the passage quoted above from the judgement in the 1924 case neither of the two allegations are proved. The conspiracy was only fomented and it was 'probably also originated' by the Communist International. Had the latter part of the allegation been proved the judge would not express his view doubtfully. A branch organization of the Communist International is alleged to be an instrument for the commission of the offence. Insofar as the existence of the instrument is not proved, even the possibility of the commission of the offence does not arise. The whole thing is reduced to a mere intention on the part of one or more individuals. This does not constitute conspiracy as defined by law.

But the provision of Section 121A is so very sweeping that through an ingenious construction almost anything can be brought under its purview. For example, a conspiracy punishable under this very elastic law can be proved in the following way:

A writes a letter to B saying that he agrees with C who maintains that the people of India are entitled to assert the right of self-determination by all means. This view can be interpreted as an intention to commit the offence of depriving the king of his sovereignty of India. B fails to deliver the letter to the police or the police intercepts the letter; there will be material for a proceeding under the Section 121A, IPC. There is an agreement amongst more than two persons regarding a view tantamount to the offence penalizable by the Section. A declares his agreement and B abets him in that.

The ingenious construction can go even to the extent of including dreams as evidence of conspiracy to punish one just as Dionysius was executed because he dreamt of having killed the tyrant of ancient Greece. The logic of the barbarous Draconian law was but the reflex of hidden thought. But even the reactionary Blackstone condemned such prerogative on the part of a modern king that 'such is not the temper of the English Law in which an open or overt act is necessary to convict the traitor'. Besides, more than one eminent jurist have held that the construction is odious to English Law.

Section 121A, IPC is modelled after the English Law of Treason *but dispenses with the overt act as the proof of the offence*. The object of this very significant discrimination in the administration of the self-same law in the two countries for the protection of the same King is to transform it in India into a formidable weapon for the suppression of the least freedom of speech and even of thought. The evidence against me does not prove any revolutionary action but only revolutionary views and intentions.

The crux of the prosecution case is that violence is advocated in the documents which are alleged to be written by me. The phrase 'By means of a violent revolution' does not occur in the text of Section 121A. It is tacked on to the charge against me with the object of implying that I intended to use 'criminal force' which is penalizible by the section 121A, IPC. The theory of criminal force presupposes as its antithesis moral force or virtuous force. Presumably the offences catalogued under Section 121A, IPC would not be punishable if they were committed by means of moral or virtuous force. But in reality force is force. The moral philosophy of the ruling power is that force becomes criminal when directed against it but that it is an instrument of virtue when employed for the preservation of the ruling power. In other words the mercenary army with which the sovereignty of the British is maintained in a foreign country is an instrument of moral or virtuous force. The rifles employed in putting down the pauperized peasants of Malabar or Burma are the arms of God. But the same weapon in the hands of the oppressed people of India fighting for freedom will be instruments of crime. Aeroplanes bombing the Frontier tribesmen are vehicles of virtue, teaching those depraved people a moral lesson, but any resistance on the part of the latter is 'criminal'.

The oppressed people and exploited classes are not obliged to respect the moral philosophy of the ruling power. The sovereign right of the Indian people is usurped by foreign power, and as the foreign usurpers maintain themselves in power by force, the Indian people are obliged to use force to recover their sovereign right. *A despotic power is always overthrown only in this way*. The force employed in this process is not criminal. On the contrary, even the gun carried by the army of the British government of India is an instrument of crime. It becomes an instrument of virtue when it is turned against the imperialist state. Weapons in the hands of the oppressed masses of India will be so many hammers to break the chain of a colonial slavery binding one-fifth of the human race.

I am justified in holding this view on the authority of the English philosophers. Bentham is of opinion that 'despotism is veiled under some happy and ingenious phrase as the great power of our ethical system bears witness'. Such happy and ingenious phrases used by the British Government of India to justify its despotism are 'Rule of law', 'public security' etc.

Hume is of opinion that 'in case of enormous tyranny and oppression it is lawful to take arms even against the supreme power and that as Government is a pure human invention for mutual advantage and security, it no longer imposes any obligation either moral or natural when once it ceases to have that tendency'.

I hold that the British Government of India has been an 'enormous tyranny and oppression' for the Indian masses and that it has never been of any advantage for them. So according to Hume, the national philosopher of England, the people of India are fully justified to take up arms against the present government. In doing so they will not be employing 'criminal force'; on the contrary the force is moral and virtuous only when employed for the conquest and defence of freedom.

By their very nature cases like this represent so many attempts to suppress the strivings of the Indian people for freedom. By what principle of Legislation and Government are these attacks upon the popular will raised to the dignity of the administration of justice? Has the present government of India any constitutional basis? Was the law under which the people are being persecuted given with popular consent given by a spokesman? How did the British King acquire his sovereignty in India? When did the Indian people swear allegiance to the British crown?

I maintain that the people of India owe no allegiance to the British crown. Therefore the law under which I am charged has no force of law in the modern civilized sense of the term. Indians are not bound to obey it because they have nothing to say about its promulgation. The British Government of India hold no power of attorney from Indian people. It is an instrument of predatory imperialism foisted upon this country by violence. There can be no progress, prosperity, and liberty for the Indian people until this foreign domination is overthrown. The charge against me is absurd. This trial is a form of violence. This court itself is not strictly bound by the law under which I am tried. Therefore my trial and punishment cannot be justified even by the formal argument that this court is bound by the codified law to judge the constitutionality and validity of which is beyond its competence. I shall cite an English authority on constitutional law in support of my case. Dealing with the laws made by the Council of India (section 121A, IPC is one of them) Prof. Dicey in his book on the law of English constitution writes:

> The courts in India may, when the occasion arises, pronounce upon the validity and constitutionality of laws made by the Indian Council . . . When there is any particular case before the court, whether civil or criminal in which the rights and liabilities of any party are affected by the legislation of the Indian Council, the courts may have to consider and determine with a view to a particular case whether such legislation was or was not within the legal powers of the Council which is of course the same thing as adjudicating as regards the particular case in hand upon the validity or constitutionality of the legislation in question . . . an Indian tribunal may be called upon to say that an act passed by the Governor General need not be obeyed because it is unconstitutional and void.

The legality and constitutionality of the law under which I am charged being thus open to dispute, the court and the assessors should not approach the case from the mechanical limited point of view suggested by the public prosecutor in his opening address. He suggested that the court and the assessors need not consider whether my views are correct on principle nor is it necessary for them to judge whether my actions were really dictated by the interests of the Indian people, that the duty of the court and the assessors is only to ascertain if the evidence against me proves violation of the particular law. I ask the court and the assessors to judge my views and actions on their merits in the light of the broad principles of the civilized government and legislation.

The authority of the Indian Penal Code is something like that of the Ten Commandments revealed to Moses or that of the laws of Dracon or Solon. The definition of crimes and provision for punishment affecting the huge population of a vast country were practically the work of one single foreign individual, Macaulay. The British parliament exercised its self-arrogated sovereign power over a foreign people unquestionably believing in his knowledge and wisdom.

Presumably none claims any divine inspiration on the part of Macaulay. That being discounted, his authority in drawing up the Code of crimes and punishments for the Indian people must be compared to that of the Law-givers of the antiquity. But even the authority of Lycargus, Dracon, or Solon was not solely based upon his personal wisdom. They were called to their office by those for whom the laws were given. So, even the laws of barbarous antiquity were not entirely based upon the wisdom of any individual. To some extent they were based upon the delegated authority of the people who had to obey them. In the case of the author of the Indian Penal Code, there was no such delegation of authority. So the Indian Penal Code cannot claim the legality even of barbarous antique standard. Particularly invalid and unconstitutional are the sections penalizing political offences for they arbitrarily imposed upon the people of India obedience to a government which was not established with their consent. Nothing but sheer violence can make the Indian people obey these sections of the IPC.

Macaulay's Code was raised to the dignity of law by the Council of the Governor General which had no constitutional authority. That body was appointed by the British Crown and naturally represented the interests not of the Indian people but of a foreign power. The object of the laws given by that body, therefore, was only to consolidate the position of the British conquerors in India. This was particularly the case of the sections of the IPC punishing offences against the state. The object of these sections was to force upon the people of India obedience to their foreign conquerors. Modern political philosophers and principles of legislation do not grant legality to such measures taken to coerce a whole people.

The charge against me hinges on the assumption that the British King has sovereign right over the Indian people. The substance of the offence I am alleged to have committed is to dispute this assumption. If I can show that the assumption is groundless, that the British King has no constitutional position in India, the absurdity of the charge against me will be palpable, the invalidity and the indefensibility of the law under which the charge is made will be proved. Searching the entire history of India's unfortunate relation with Britain, one does not find the least evidence to establish the assumption.

The British Crown acquired its domination over India in a rather singular way. It was not even by conquest that the valuable acquisition was made. It was more like quiet appropriation of stolen or robbed property in return for the help given to the robber in their depredation.

For a hundred years the British East India Company held the political power in India nominally as a vassal of the Mughal Emperor. At the same time the East India Company owed its existence to charters granted by the British Crown through the Parliament. Towards the end of its existence, the Company practically ceased to be a trading corporation and become a department of the British Government, that is, through the instrumentality of trading Company actual political power passed gradually from the titular Mughal Emperor to the British Crown. The people of India had nothing to say about the transfer of the power to rule them, nor was the power transferred voluntarily by the Mughal Emperor. All along the East India Company as the administrator of India theoretically derived its authority from its vassallage to the Mughal Emperor, while on the other hand it was accountable not to him but to the British Parliament. So, there were two supreme authorities, one theoretical and the other practical. This dualism typified the entire history of the administration of India by the British East India Company.

So long as such an ambiguous situation obtained it would be clearly absurd to make the people of India punishable for offence against the British Crown. The Law Commissioners examining Macaulay's code were constrained to admit the peculiarity of the situation. In the report the Law Commissioners made the following very significant observation: 'A great change indeed has taken place since the grant of the Diwani of the Lower provinces to the Company, but it has taken place so gradually that although it would be absurd to say that the natives of the British India are not subjects of His Majesty, it would be impossible to point out the particular time when they became so'. In view of this expressed inability of the Law Officers of the British Crown to indicate when the people of India one way or the other accepted its sovereignty, the constitutional position of the British Government of India is revealed to be without any foundation. The Law Commissioners were indeed pleased to opine that it would be absurd for the people of India to say that they were not subjects of the British King. But this dogmatic opinion cannot be the basis of any legislation, since the same Law Officers admittedly failed to point out how and when the Indians had become the subjects of the British King. Moreover the Law Commissioners were clearly of opinion that the English Law of Treason was not applicable to India. Why? Simply because Indians were not subjects of the British King.

The sections of the Indian Penal Code penalizing offences against the state are modelled after the English law of treason—the mediaeval Edwardian as well as the comparatively modern Georgian. As regards these sections of the Draft Code, the Law Commissioners found that 'In the opinion of many respectable and intelligent judicial officials of the Company it (that is, the English law of treason) could not legally be enforced against such a native of India'. Incidentally it is necessary to point out that all those 'Judicial officials of the Company' were Englishmen.

So, in the middle of nineteenth century, according to its own law officers, the British Crown had no constitutional authority over India and therefore could not claim from the Indians the allegiance owed to it by the people of Britain. Yet only ten years later in 1860, the doubtful section became law as an integral part of the IPC. What happened in the meantime to warrant the enactment of the doubtful section in law? In the intervening years nothing had happened to so radically alter the relationship between the British Crown and the Indian people, to make this latter legally subjects of the former. The dethronement of the Mughal Emperor and the assumption by the British Queen of the title 'Empress of India' were formalities. Presumably the previous doubts about the legal relation between the British Crown and the Indian people were obviated by these formal acts. But the fact remains that the Indian people never swore an allegiance to the British Crown. The Queen's proclamation did not have as its counterpart a reciprocal proclamation on the part of the Indian people. When James the Second was deposed from the throne of England and his place was occupied by a Dutch Prince, the change took place on the initiative and authority of the British Parliament. An act of the British Parliament made a foreign prince the King of England. The queen of England was not made the empress of India by any such authority of the Indian people.

Even the theory of acquiescence cannot be advanced in the support of the constitutionality of the position of the British Crown in India. What might appear as acquiescence on the part of the Indian people is silence imposed by fear. Although gradually acquiring political power, the British Crown until the middle of the nineteenth century did not claim formal allegiance or loyalty from the Indian people. The law officers of the crown were themselves doubtful about the constitutional position of the British King in India. So, until then the theory of acquiescence does not apply. On the contrary, soon after that period there was active resistance to British Domination as evidenced by the Mutiny. In 1870 section 121A was added to the penal code making the very expression of disagreement with the established government an offence subject to severe punishment. Then there is the very elastic section 124A amended repeatedly to make almost anything punishable. So, the absence of any active opposition since 1870 was not a sign of acquiescence. But it was silence enforced by coercive laws. There remains then the period of twelve years between the formal assumption by the British Crown of the sovereignty of

India and the addition of the section of 121A to the Indian Penal Code in relation to which the theory of acquiescence may be argued. But even then the memory of the bloody suppression of the mutiny was too fresh to encourage any new active opposition to the British Rule. Finally, the innumerable repressive laws and ordinances passed ever since 1870 make the theory of acquiescence entirely untenable.

In his Principles of Legislation, Bentham completely explodes the theory of acquiescence as the basis for constitutional authority. He writes: 'Can a few vague acclamations really be accounted an act of individual, and universal consent? Can such a contract really bind the multitude of individuals who never heard of it, who were never summoned to ratify, who could not have refused assent without risking their lives and states?' So, in the opinion of the father of modern English principles of government and legislation, the demonstrative loyalty of the parasitic upper classes of India does not lend constitutionality to the British domination. The authors of the laws penalizing the Indian people for offences against the state were themselves conscious of the unconstitutionality of their laws. Therefore they worded the laws ambiguously. The offence I am alleged to have committed is treason in plain language. The penal law of every country uses the term, treason. The English model of the Indian law also uses the expressive term treason. Why does this generally employed term suddenly disappear from the Indian law? There is a reason. Treason is violation of some trust, contract or allegiance. Since the Indian people never made any contract to obey the British King nor swore allegiance, no act on their part could be treason against the king. But unless the conspiracy to deprive the King of his sovereignty means treason it does not mean anything. None can be seriously charged with a meaningless jumble of words. No Indian can be accused of treason against the British King because such accusation can be made only on the ground of violation of the contract or allegiance.

The doctrine of treason is smuggled into the Indian law surreptitiously, because the British Crown has no constitutional position in India. Adventures and forgeries of a Clive, robberies of a Warren Hastings, unscrupulous diplomacy of a Wellesley, depradations of another Hastings and finally the land-grabbing of Dalhousie are very damaging arguments against any constitutional claim. But the British Crown has no other constitutional leg to stand upon in its valuable Indian domains.

The only justification of the British rule over India is that it has been a successful act of usurpation. In denouncing the tyrants of ancient Greece, Plato argued that 'usurpation is not justified by success'. Other Greek philosophers, Aristotle, Xenophon etc., those spiritual powers of modern European civilization, all held similar views. Discounting the time factor and the resulting change of conditions, the British conquest of India was very similar to the rise of the despotic monarchy on the ruins of the city republics of Greece. On both the occasions, the aggressors took advantage of troubled conditions to establish their despotic sway. According to Grote the English author of the splendid *History of Greece*, the philosophers and law-givers of that cradle of modern civilization regard 'the despots as among the greatest criminals; the man who assassinated him was an object of public honour and reward, and a virtuous Greek would have seldom scrupled to carry his sword in myrtle branches for the execution of the deed'.

Drinking deep in the fountain of the teachings of the ancient Greek philosophers that it was no crime but honour to destroy a despot, the founders of the modern democratic states of Europe passionately preached the sacred right of revolt. The English philosophers, John Locke and David Hume, were among the illustrious pioneers who preached the sacred right of revolt. It was in England that the right was first asserted. A king was beheaded and another deposed in the process of that great revolution in England. I am accused of having advocated the freedom of Indian people through a revolution. But we read in the work of Lord John Russel, *The British Constitution*, the following sentence: 'The revolution of 1688 is the mighty stock from which all other revolutions had sprung.' In 1688 the British people asserted the right of deposing the despotic king as well as of being ruled only with their consent. As a prelude to that they had executed another king and gone to very near abolishing the monarchy.

Demanding the trial and execution of Charles the First, Ludlow exclaimed, 'The war has been occasioned by invasion of our rights and open breach of our law and constitution on the king's part'. Charged as I am any Indian would be justified to retort in these memorable words of Ludlow which constitute a very important landmark in the history of England.

The law, under which I am tried, was enacted by a body having no sovereign legislative authority. The Law Commissioners examining the Indian Penal Code drafted by Macaulay ruled, 'that the Legislative Council of India has no power to legislate. It could not make such law because it had been prohibited by the British Parliament from doing so'. The act of the British Parliament defining the legislative powers of a Council of India forbids the latter to make any laws, 'which shall in any way affect any prerogative of the Crown and the authority of the Parliament or any part of the unwritten laws of constitution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, whereon may depend in any degree the allegiance of any person to the Crown of the United Kingdom or the sovereignty of the Dominion of the said Crown over any part of the state territories'.

By this prescription the Council of India was deprived of all sovereign authority. Besides, even if it had been granted any, that would not be constitutional, not having been derived from the reservoir of all authority, namely, the people for whom it was to legislate. The 'allegiance' to the Crown of the United Kingdom was thus forced upon the people of the India by an act of the British Parliament and the 'sovereignty' of the said Crown is arbitrarily claimed without the least shadow of constitutionality.

According to Professor Dicey, 'Under these acts [of the British Parliament] the Indian Council is in the strictest sense a non-sovereign body.' Such a body obviously could have no right whatsoever to make laws penalizing offences against the state. Still it did make such laws (including the one under which I am charged) with special dispensation of the British Parliament.

Laws made under such circumstances have no constitutional force. Indians are not bound to obey those laws. This Court itself is not bound by them. I have already quoted Professor Dicey's opinion on this point. To violate these arbitrary laws is no crime. On the contrary, the imposition of these laws upon the Indian people by a foreign power was an act of aggression on the rights and liberties of the former. If the English people were justified in beheading a King and deposing another to assert their sovereign right, by no law can the Indian people be deprived of the right to overthrow the domination of a foreign king. To subject Indian people to laws not given with their consent is usurpation of powers by those hiding behind those unconstitutional legislations. The usurpers of political power cannot claim the protection of law any more than a robber or a thief can do so. I challenge the legality of the British Government of India and the pretension of the British King to any sovereign right in this country on the authority of Bentham. He wrote: 'Not even the age of a Nestor should suffice to secure a usurper in the wages and spoils of his lawless seizure. Why should then ever come a time when the wrongdoer shall be at rest; why should he enjoy the fruits of his crime under protection of the very law he has violated?'

The charter of slavery is no law for the slave. When all the avenues of normal and peaceful progress are blocked by the established order of things, violent overthrow of this latter becomes a necessity for human welfare. We learn again from the English jurist and moralist, Bentham, that 'to condemn all change is to condemn all progress'. So the father of the modern English theory of legislation would not approve of the sections of the Indian Penal Code penalizing offences against an unconstitutional despotic state. For the real object is to throttle the voice and hinder all activities in favour of any real change in the political destiny of the Indian masses. The legislative Council of India was forbidden to make laws regarding offences against the state, because the competence to prescribe punishment for political offences would automatically carry with it the prerogative of conferring upon the Indian people political rights. Even today the Indian Legislature is limited by legal deficiency of its origin. It is subordinated to the British Parliament. The Government of India Act of 1919 was supposed to open before the people of India the way to self-government. It however did not in any way alter the position of the British Parliament as the supreme authority. As a matter of fact the permanent nature of this sovereignty of the British Parliament was once again affirmed in that act. There can be no change in the Government of India except with the sanction of the British Parliament on which the people of India are not represented. The Indian legislature has not, and will never have the right to make laws without freeing the Indian people from forced allegiance to a foreign Crown. The supreme political authority over India had been usurped by a foreign power not as a temporary state of affairs but for good.

Sir Valentine Chirol in his book *India Old and New* writes:

> After the Mutiny government under the direct authority of the crown lost the flexibility which the vigilant control of the British rule—a system devised by foreigners and worked by foreigners—at its best a trusteeship committed to them for the benefit of the people of India, but to be discharged on the sole judgement and discretion of the British trustees. The Mutiny shook the finer faith which had contemplated the finality some day or other of the trusteeship, and had introduced Western education into India as the agency by which Indians were to be prepared to resume when that day came, the task of governing and protecting themselves. There was a tacit assumption now, even if never officially formulated, that the trusteeship was to last for ever, and with that assumption grew the belief that those who were actually employed in discharging it were alone competent to judge the methods by which it was discharged.

This was written after the introduction of Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms by a keen observer of Indian affairs who cannot be suspected of any hostility towards the British rule in India.

So, the despotic fundamental law of the Indian Constitution limits the perspective of Indian political progress to self-government within the British Empire. Those who are not satisfied with this limited perspective automatically come under the sweeping purview of section 121A of the Indian Penal Code. For, complete independence of the Indian people becomes conditional inevitably upon the overthrow of the sovereign power assumed illegally by the British Crown. As the British King on his part, is not likely to abdicate his ill-gotten and unconstitutional power in India, the Indian masses are obliged to get rid of him by force, unless they are prepared to go down in the ruthless struggle for existence. So, the 'separation of India from imperialist Britain through a violent revolution' is an abject necessity in the interest of the masses of the Indian people. It is not personal desire, nor have I any personal grudge against the British king. Let Britain cease to be an imperialist power exploiting the masses of the Indian people to helpless pauperization and the necessity of a violent clash between her and the Indian people will disappear. Let there be no violent oppression and exploitation of the Indian masses and there will be no occasion for a violent revolution. Otherwise, all the repressive laws, all the ruthless forces of their administration, all the instruments of imperialist terror will not be able to retard the march of human progress. In 1797, commenting on the situation in Ireland, Lord Chatham wrote: 'There was ambition, there was sedition, there was violence: but no man shall persuade me that it was not the cause of liberty on the one side and tyranny on the other.'

These words characterize the situation in India today. Therefore, we hear men like Mr V. J. Patel, the Ex-President of the Legislative Assembly, sounding alarm. Speaking in London the other day he said cautiously, 'I am convinced that India is heading towards a revolution: and if the Government does not concede the Congress demand I do not know what will happen to it. I know that today between revolution and India stands Gandhi and the Government must concede India's demand for freedom.'

But the demand for the freedom of the Indian people cannot be conceded by the British Government; because this demand, if seriously meant, challenges the very existence of the British Government. As a matter of fact, the law under which I am charged, makes such demand punishable. Complete independence of India means her secession from the British Empire which inevitably implies the overthrow of the British King's sovereignty in India. Had the Lahore resolution of the National Congress not been hedged in by the old creed, it might be legally constructed as an offence against the state punishable under section 121A, IPC. Even that creed might not save the Congress should the Government decide to proceed against it for declaring in favour of complete independence. The unwritten law of the Constitution of India under British rule binds her perpetually to the Empire. A declaration in favour of complete independence, which means separation from the Empire if it means anything, commits the organization making such a declaration logically to 'unconstitutional', 'illegal' and 'violent' action. Thus the organization comes under the cruel purview of Section 121A, IPC being guilty of conspiring to deprive the king of his sovereignty of India.

The purport of the charge against me is that I have sought to overthrow the 'Government established by law'. But the charge cannot stand even so interpreted. For the present Government of India is not a government 'established by law'. India is not ruled by law. Professor Dicey defines the term, 'rule of law', as follows:

> Rule of law means the absolute supremacy or predominance of regular law as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power, and excludes the existence of arbitrariness, or prerogative, or even of wide discretionary authority on the part of the government.

This definition does not apply to the present Government of India in any sense. Firstly, what claims the dignity of law cannot be recognized as such for it has no constitutional basis. It has been given not at all in compliance with modern theories of legislation. Secondly, even these sham laws do not predominate the executive which is absolute in India. The Viceroy's power of certification sets at naught the authority of Legislature whenever necessary. All law is subordinate to that absolute power derived, not from the people, but from a foreign king. There is no check whatsoever upon executive arbitrariness. The ordinary laws, so arbitrary by themselves, are frequently superseded and subverted by old regulations and new ordinances. In face of these facts it is absurd to talk of the 'rule of law' in this country. Here the Legislature has not the constitutional authority and the executive is not in the least bound by the sham and impotent Legislature.

It is sheer despotism to punish Indians for the attempt to overthrow something which, in so far as they are concerned, does not exist, that is, 'a government established by law'. How can they deprive the British King of what he does not legally possess, namely, the sovereign authority of India?

First let the Indians have their 'government established by law' in the place of the present imperialist state having no legal or constitutional basis whatsoever. Then, the only law for the oppressed and exploited people of India is the law of revolt—the majestic law of revolutionary struggle for freedom. The imperialist rulers of India violate every day this only law that the people of India can observe under the present condition. My arrest and trial represent an instance of such violation of our law. To accuse me of any offence is to add insult to injury. I stand here not to answer any such absurd charge and insolent accusation. I stand here to indict the British Government of India at the bar of the civilized world for wanton aggression against one-fifth of the human race, for robbing our land, for obstructing our progress in every sense.

The English philosopher David Hume, who greatly influenced modern political thought throughout Europe, testifies to the legality of my indictment against the British Government of India. I have already quoted his opinion to that effect. He held that the people were justified in overthrowing a government when this has ceased to perform the function of guarding the welfare of the community. India has not derived any benefits from the British Government. It was never established with any such purpose. It was not set up by the people of India to advance mutual interests. On the contrary it was established with the purpose of oppressing and exploiting the people of India. It has mercilessly done so for nearly two hundred years. Consequently, the Indian masses today are sunk in the lowest depth of economic ruin and cultural backwardness.

The disastrous consequences of the British rule are depicted in many a document exhibited in this case as evidence of my guilt. These very documents (I refer particularly to Chapters II and V of my book, *India in Transition* exh. B,) prove my case that the present regime is exceedingly harmful for the masses of the Indian people and, therefore, must be overthrown in the interests of these latter. In support of my case I shall produce the testimony of an English authority on Indian economic affairs. Mr Findlay Shiraz in his latest publication 'Certain Economic Facts in regard to India', estimates the annual per capita income of India at about 40 American Dollars (that is, slightly over Rs 100). In his opinion it is the lowest compared to all the civilized countries, being one-twelfth of that in England and one-twentieth of that in the USA. According to the report of the department of commercial intelligence, the purchasing power of the Indian peasants, that is of 73 per cent of the entire population, last year declined to 50 per cent; according to other English authorities the total indebtedness of the Indian peasantry is between Rs 700 to Rs 1100 Crores. According to the report of the Whitley Commission, the wages in India are lower than in any other modern industrial country, and the condition of labour is incredibly bad. Nearly 46 millions of people are perpetually unemployed in India. Still the Royal Commission on labour recommends a 10-hour working day, while in all other civilized countries an 8-hour day has been introduced long since, and the workers now are demanding its reduction to 7 and 6 hours. In one country, in the land of 'bloody' Bolshevism, the attempt to introduce which in this country is my crime, people work 7 hours a day for 5 days a week.

In contrast to these facts I shall quote another set of facts also given by Mr Findlay Shiraz. They are about the military expenditure of a number of countries. The facts cited above show that the masses of the Indian population are incredibly poor. Still, no less than 45 per cent of the revenue paid mostly by Indian pauperized masses, is appropriated for the military budget on which the Legislature has no control. The expenditure on the same item in the budget of some countries comparably richer than India, is as follows: Britain 12.8 per cent, USA 16.4 per cent, Austria 4.5, Canada 2.4 per cent and the most militarized country of the present day, France spends only 22 per cent of the budget on this item.

One more fact to give the finishing touch to the picture. We have heard various theories about the British Administration of Indian Trusteeship, the White man's burden, civilizing mission, protecting the minorities against the caste Hindus etc. It is even made to appear that the British has no material interest in ruling India. The fact of the matter, however, is that from India, Britain derives a net income of about 260 crores a year.

These few facts clearly prove that the British Government of India does not perform the function of a modern civilized government. Its concern is not the welfare of the governed. It is an instrument in the hand of foreign exploiters of the country. Again I shall rely upon the testimony of the famous English Jurist and political philosopher, Bentham, to establish my contention.

According to Bentham, the function of government and Law is 'to provide subsistence, to supply abundance, to encourage equality and to maintain security'.

The British Government of India cannot claim to have performed any of these functions except the last. It has established order in the country, but the maintainance of order has been a plausible pretext to suppress all expression of the popular will. 'Law and order' have become chains of slavery for the people. And the Indian masses have paid very heavily for this lesson. Poverty and pauperization of the masses have been the dear price. Let alone abundance, the great majority of the people are not provided with the barest subsistence by the British Government which is guided by the cardinal principle of English liberalism, 'Greatest good for the Greatest Number'. Its object has been to secure the greatest gain for the foreign exploiters.

I have already cited the opinion of Hume that it is no crime to take arms against such an oppressive and tyrannical government as the British administration of India has proved to be. Now I shall quote the same authority holding that his verdict, cited already, is applicable even when a government is established constitutionally. He writes:

> It is certain that the people still (that is, even after the establishment of constitutional government) retain the right of resistance since even in these governments [Hume is dealing with constitutional monarchies] the cases wherein resistance is lawful must occur often and greater indulgence be given to the subjects to defend themselves by force of arms.

What would the national philosopher of England say about trials like this and the law under which such trials take place? On the authority of Hume, the Indian people have the lawful right to rise up in arms against the British Government of India, even if its claim to legality were granted. From this it follows that even after India has been granted eventually some fake constitution by the British Parliament, the oppressed and exploited masses will still have the right so resist it with arms.

The right of the people to revolt against and overthrow any government is conclusively established by Hume in the following words: 'It is gross absurdity to suppress in any government a right without remedy, or declare that the supreme power is shared with the people without allowing that it is lawful for them to defend their share against invaders. Therefore, those who would deny the right of resistance have renounced all pretensions of common sense and do not merit a serious answer'.

Thus according to Hume, *the Author and the administrators of the law under which I am prosecuted are devoid of commonsense*. This law is absurd, and the regime based upon such law is lawless. The right of the Indian people to resist the established government with armed force if necessary can be contested only by denying the very basic principle of modern political philosophy that the supreme power is shared with the people. The British Government of India does not recognize this principle. That means, it is pure despotism; and, therefore, it is all the more lawful for the Indian people to overthrow it by every available means.

Bourgeois political philosophy is based on the theory of contract. The assumption is that political society, that is the state, originated with a voluntary contract between the ruler and the ruled. When absolute monarchy was assailed by the bourgeoisie armed with the theory of contract, preaching the 'sacred right of revolt', the defenders of old order maintained that by the original contract the people renounced all liberty and reposed the supreme authority in the king. In England Hobbes expounded this theory in the middle of the seventeenth century when Kingship was stormed by the puritan Revolution. Hobbes is detested by the spiritual fathers of modern England as 'the apologist of despotism'. John Locke maintains that government is based upon a bilateral contract between the prince and the people. By this contract the prince undertakes to govern according to certain laws, in a manner subservient to general happiness, while on the other hand the people undertake to obey so long as the prince remains faithful to the terms and conditions on which he received the crown. No such contract was ever made between the British King and the Indian people.

In any case such a contract does not deprive the people of the right to revolt. Logically the people alone can judge whether the prince has been faithful to the terms and conditions of the contract, for the prince can never be expected to admit that he has violated his trust and to call upon the people to overthrow him.

The Revolution cleared away the medieval doctrine of Hobbes and put an end to absolute monarchy in England already at the end of the seventeenth century. But the British Parliament can rely only upon the ugly ghost of Hobbes in asserting its trusteeship of India. The doctrine of trusteeship implies that the Indian people have renounced all liberty and placed themselves for ever under the supreme authority of the British Crown. The trusteeship was established by the Queen's Proclamation but it was an entirely one-sided affair. There was no reciprocal declaration of loyalty on the part of the Indian people, So, the regime inaugurated by the Queen's Proclamation was despotism, benevolent only in appearance and profession. Even today it has not changed its character, and it has no intention of doing so. The outcome of the Round Table Conference proves this. A government based upon the doctrine of trusteeship cannot but be a despotism.

Therefore the attempt to overthrow the despotic rule of our own country by the foreign usurpers of power is no offence. It is an act for the assertion of popular liberty. Once again I cite Hume to testify in my favour. He writes:

> When the Chief Magistrate (that is, the head of a government or government as a whole) enters into measures extremely pernicious to the public . . . it is allowable to resist and dethrone him though such resistance and violence may, in general terms of law, be deemed unlawful and rebellious. Nothing is more essential to public interests than the preservation of public liberty.

The laws on the Indian Statutes Book penalizing offence against the state, and the executive ordinances issued frequently on the specious plea of public safety, are measures extremely pernicious to the public liberty because their sole object is to crush public liberty and defend their despotic regime. Indeed, every single administrative act of the Government of India is such an extremely pernicious measure as warrants its overthrow. For it does not rule with the consent of the people, by laws made by their representatives. Even at this very moment such measures are being taken. The new Press Law, for example, also justifies resistance to the extent of armed insurrection. In these enlightened days of the twentieth century such an attack upon the Press is intolerable. Then there is the ruinous exchange policy maintained in the teeth of the unanimous opposition of the elected members of the Legislature. Finally, the certification of the Budget imposing upon the starving masses new burdens of taxation.

In England, revolutions took place on any one of similar issues. But in India, the government set up by the British conqueror rules with such measures. Still it claims to be established by law and ruthlessly suppresses all opposition to its despotic sway.

The law under which I am tried together with other penalizable offences against the state, deprives the Indian people of the right to shape their political destiny as people of England as well as the peoples of other modern civilized countries did. The foundation of the British constitution,—the Magna Carta—was laid in a victorious uprising against the King. Later on the structure raised on that foundation was cemented with royal blood. The successive stages of constitutional advance in Britain were marked by revolts, rebellions, revolutions and regicides and civil wars. Finally all real power and prerogative was taken away from the King. The Crown became a constitutional fiction. It was retained in its empty glory and fictitious authority with the sanction of the people. The Treason Law now in force in Britain, was enacted after the establishment of these conditions. A law given under such different conditions cannot be arbitrarily transplanted in India. Still, the law under which I am tried was made in imitation of the English Treason Law.

It is a well known lesson of history that revolutions are inherent in the process of political progress, that armed resistance to absolute monarchy and other forms of despotic government is the only way to the establishment of a constitutional state. Indians are not bound to obey the so-called laws which would prohibit them from travelling the path of political progress travelled by all other civilized peoples. It is maintained by our self-appointed British trustees that constitutional development took place in England gradually, without any violence. Indians should follow the noble example of their mentor, and wait patiently and peacefully for the boon of self-government within the Empire to be granted by the British Parliament in some indefinitely distant future.

It is another question whether the British constitution represents the last word of a wise statecraft, and should be the political ideal for the Indian people. What is to the point is that the theory of the peaceful evolution of the British constitution is a myth. The present constitution of Britain grew out of a series of violent conflicts between the forces of reaction and progress just as the democratic constitution of any other country.

I shall prove this again with the testimony of a conservative English jurist, Walter Bagehot, the author of the standard work on the British Constitution. Bagehot writes:

> Our freedom is the result of centuries of resistance, more or less legal,

> more or less illegal, more or less audacious and more or less timid, to the executive Government. We have inherited the traditions of conflicts and preserve them in the fullness of victory. We look on the state action not as our own action, but as alien action, as an imposed tyranny from without, not as the consummate result of our own organized will.

It is a sign of political maturity on the part of English people to be so suspicious of the executive power, at least partially responsible to themselves. But any expression of similar sentiment on the part of the Indian people, subjected to a foreign despotism, is punishable as sedition and treason. India is enjoined to travel on the footprint of England in establishing a fully responsible government, but she is not allowed to go through the epoch-making stages of the journey. If some Indians reprint extracts from the writings of the spiritual fathers of modern England without mentioning their names he is sure to be convicted for sedition. Even the mention of the names of the authors may not protect him from the clutches of the new Press Act. And acting upon the teachings of those English philosophers, jurists, and statesmen, an Indian is sure to come under the purview of Section 121A, IPC as I have come. For, whatever I have written and done can be fully justified in the light of the history of England.

The British are proud of their unwritten constitution. They are proud, because it was not written in blood. The constitution, however, has a very concrete basis in the Magna Carta which was laid in an armed resistance to the king's power. Referring to the struggle over the enforcement of the Magna Carta, Bagehot writes:

> The principal controversy was, of course, between the king and the nation—the king trying to see how far the nation would let him go, and the nation murmuring and being recalcitrant, and seeing how many acts of administration they could prevent, and how many of its claims they could resist.

So the very foundation of the British Constitution was laid by the assertion of the right of the subjects to resist the powers of the king, to revolt against him. Bagehot then explains: 'But the right of self-taxation would have been a dead letter save for an armed force which is the only guarantee against despotism.' But according to the ethics of the so-called laws of the British Government of India, it is criminal for the oppressed and exploited masses to seek this only guarantee. I am prosecuted, because I have tried to help the Indian people learn from the lesson of history. In pointing out the inevitability of an armed revolution I have only told a historical truth. Even at this moment, the irresponsible Government of India is deciding to impose a greater burden of taxation upon the famished masses, flouting the elected members of the Legislative Assembly.

These could make their opposition effective only by letting the cynical executive know that they would call upon the people to resist heavy taxation with arms if necessary. Gandhi could have got something out of the Round Table Conference, if he had the good sense of Shivaji, if he could tell the British imperialists what Shivaji said to Aurangzeb. Shivaji told his captor that if he would again return to the South he would kindle such a fire as would not be extinguished with all the waters of the Ganges and Jamuna. Shivaji kept his word and Southern India was free from Mughal tyranny.

Then, the organization of the nobles who forced king John to sign the Magna Carta, is glorified as the founder of the glorious British Constitution. But our efforts in India to organize a party of the workers and peasants with the object of securing national freedom are punishable as 'conspiracy' to deprive the British King of his non-existent sovereignty of India.

The illiteracy of the Indian masses is pointed out by our foreign rulers as the sign of India's unripeness for political freedom. The appalling mass illiteracy in India is a damaging commentary upon her civilized rulers and is a cogent reason for their overthrow from power. However, the point I want to make here is that illiteracy did not prevent the founders of British Constitution from accomplishing their historic mission. The illustrious victors of Runnymede put their cross-marks on the great Charter. They could not write their names. Inability to wield the pen did not hinder them from demanding and conquering political freedom, as long as they could wield their sword. Force is the lever of all progress. It is the foundation of political freedom. Therefore, it is perfectly lawful for the oppressed and exploited masses of India to use force to resist and overthrow their foreign rulers.

Bagehot depicts in one single graphic sentence the next stage in the constitutional development of England: 'The slavish parliament of Henry VIII grew into the murmuring parliament of Elizabeth, the mutinous parliament of James the First and the rebellious parliament of Charles the First.'

So, according to the most conservative authority on the British Constitution, this has not evolved in a peaceful process, as we are asked to believe, but in a long struggle which broke out from time to time in mutiny, revolt, rebellions and revolutions. Power passed from the Crown to the people only through the application of force. The history of England teaches us that resistance and rebellion against the established state are the motive force of political progress. It is said that Cromwell founded the modern British Constitution. Indeed, the age-long struggle between the King and the parliament was concluded by the puritan revolution, in the final defeat of the former. The monarchy was restored, clearly as subservient to the parliament. It is maintained by constitutional historians that the sagacity of the British constitution kept the great revolutionary wave of the eighteenth and nineteenth century on the other side of the channel. What really happened, however, was that terrified by the gigantic popular upheaval on the Continent the English monarch abdicated the last vestige of real power he had retained after the Restoration of 1688. The English revolution was comparatively less violent and did not permanently abolish the mediaeval institution of monarchy, because the resistance of the aristocratic old order was not as tenacious as subsequently on the Continent. They had bled themselves to exhaustion in the ruinous civil war called the War of the Roses. They were not able to resist the rise of the bourgeoisie to power. The result was a series of compromises which subsequently headed off fresh violent outbreaks. Indians are enjoined to idealize the peaceful character of this latter stage of the constitutional development. But this would not be possible except on the foundation laid previously in revolt, rebellions and revolutions.

But even the apparently peaceful progress in the nineteenth century took place under the threat of application of force. For example, discussing the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832, Bagehot puts the pertinent question: 'Why did not the House of Lords throw out the legislation which enchroached upon the aristocratic monopoly of political power?' He himself gives the following very illuminating answer.

'If in 1832 the lords had so acted [that is, threw out the Reform Bill] there would have been a revolution.' A brief purview of the conditions during the years preceding the passage of the Reform Bill proves how correct is the opinion of Bagehot. Terrified by the Great French Revolution, the British bourgeoisie turned traitors to the glorious tradition of their forefathers, and became defenders of Kingship not only at home, but on the Continent as well. Under the leadership of the Great Commoner, the Elder Pitt, the British Parliament, in 1795, passed the Treason Act, and declared it to be perpetually in force. The new law was only a modernized version of the medieval Edwardian Statutes which had been repeatedly defied and violated by the founders of modern England during 300 years of revolutionary struggle. Under the new law, mere expression of opinion against the King's authority became treason. Had England observed such a law during the preceding centuries, she would have gone down in degradation and decay like Spain, for example. The Radicals, led by Fox, vigorously attacked the reactionary measure. In defending the new legislation against the Radical attack, Bishop Horsley propounded the doctrine of triumphant Whigism. Flouting the entire history of England, ever since the days of the great Charter, he declared: 'the people have nothing to do with laws, but to obey them'.

The law under which I am tried is made on the model of Pitt's Treason Act, based upon the reactionary doctrine formulated by Horsley. The Indian people have no right to demand a change in their political condition. Their duty is only to obey laws imposed upon them by a foreign government. (The Petition of Rights and the Bill of

(The Petition of Rights and the Bill of Rights are the most outstanding landmarks in the modern history of the British Constitution.) Section 121A, IPC would have sent the sponsors of those great measures, that is, the fathers of modern Britain to penal servitude. For, in the opinion of Dicey, those measures were 'Judicial condemnation of claims of practice on the part of the Crown, which are thereby pronounced illegal. It will be found that every or nearly every clause in the two celebrated documents, negatives some distinct claim made and put into force on behalf of the royal prerogatives'. The fathers of modern Britain agreed that the Crown should be deprived of its rights and prerogatives. They acted upon that agreement and would have used, as Bagehot testifies, 'criminal force to attain their object', that is, to deprive the King of his sovereignty. But for an analogous act, I stand, many others have stood before me, any Indian is likely to stand similarly, charged with committing a heinous offence against the state. Trials like these prove that the British Government of India can never be brought under popular control through peaceful means. Even a threat of applying force would not suffice as it did in England in 1832. Here actual application of the only remedy is indispensable. There are but two alternatives before the Indian people: perpetual colonial slavery which may eventually by somewhat gilded, or forcible overthrow of the foreign domination. I recommend the latter course which will surely be followed by the oppressed and exploited majority of the Indian people who bear the burden of colonial exploitation.

It was perfectly lawful to resist the King's authority, to depose him, to try him, even to behead him when it was necessary in the interests of the rising English bourgeoisie. Demanding the impeachment of the King's Minister, Strafford, one of the leaders of the Puritan revolution Pym declared in the House of Commons that 'to revolt against the King is not treason, unless the king was the embodiment of the constitutional authority', that is, ruled with the consent of the people under the control of their elected representatives. The puritans considered attack upon the King and his kingship as defensive because the King was violating the rights of the people. They fought to save the people from royal despotism. How much more justifiable are the desire and attempt of the Indians to overthrow the unconstitutional sovereignty of a foreign King to whom they owe no allegiance whatsoever? The Central Plan of the political platform of the Whig party, the builder of modern England and of the British Empire, was the right of revolt against the King. One of the founders of the party, Lord Russel, even at the scaffold refused emphatically to admit that resistance to the King was unlawful, and maintained the right of the subjects to resist regal authority. Even the Tories got over their royalist scruples and joined the Whigs in deposing James II. Having come to power the bourgeoisie transformed the emasculated King into a constitutional abstraction called the Crown, and declared its authority to be inviolable. The duty to obey this tin-god of the British ruling class has been by force imposed upon the Indian people. If the forefathers of the rulers of contemporary England were justified in carrying on a prolonged revolutionary struggle against the King till the latter was all but deposed, the right of the Indian people to overthrow a government deriving its authority from a foreign constitutional fiction, namely the British Crown, is inalienable and unchallengeable.

The neo-monarchism of the Whigs, however, met with powerful resistance which forced the passage of the Reforms Act. The economic crisis caused by the Napoleonic wars, led to great unemployment. There was great discontent among the working class. In 1816, there were riots all over England. Troops were employed to crush the popular outbreaks. The forerunners of the Liberal Party placed themselves at the head of the discontented masses and demanded a thorough overhauling of the political system. Many radicals advocated violent overthrow of the established regime. Street fighting took place in London itself in 1916. Secret societies sprang up throughout the country with the object of bringing about a radical change. The government was frightened. It introduced repressive measures. But the revolt grew. A large number of destitute workers marched upon London. Preparations for an armed insurrection were discovered. There was actual insurrection in some places. Cobbett, Hunt and Frances Burdelt led a great revolutionary movement advocating the transfer of political power from the rich to the masses. Violence was openly preached. The historian Gardiner records that 'there were undoubtedly many discontented persons in the country ready to use violence to gain end'. Pleading for the introduction of sweeping repressive measures the Lord Chancellor summarized the situation as follows:

> Every meeting for radical reforms is not merely a seditious attempt to undermine the existing constitution and government by bringing it into contempt, but it is an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against that constitution of the government including the king as its head.

Such were the forces in the background of the Reform Act of 1832. Evidently, the legislation did not represent a stage of peaceful constitutional evolution. It was forced upon the ruling class by a potential revolution which all but broke out. Even the second Reform Bill of 1867 was passed under the terrific shock of the revolutionary Chartist Movement as well as the ominous shadow of revolution sweeping the entire Continent. If every stage of political progress in England was thus dictated by the assertion of the revolutionary energy of the people, it cannot possibly be otherwise in India. To advance politically the people of India must adopt revolutionary means; otherwise they will stagnate in backwardness. The law that would hold them in that stage represents a violation of human rights. To disregard it is no offence.

The Indians have no reasons to idealize the British idea of citizenship. They claim to do their own thinking and have their own conception of freedom. There is no reason why the Indians should evolve a political constitution on the British model. In England itself her unwritten constitution has become absolute. Even there forces are in operation to overthrow the plutocratic dictatorship hidden behind the veil of parliamentarism. A critical examination of the British Constitution does not inspire the Indians to idealize it. The British constitution is a bundle of anomalies and contradictions, veiling a modern plutocratic state with medieval monarchist formalities. As a matter of fact Britain has the least democratic constitution of all the modern states. It retains a limited monarchy even when democracy is becoming a back number. It makes a fetish of the medieval conception of the Crown. Theoretically, the government of Britain, the so-called cabinet, is a sort of a secretariat of the king deriving its authority not from the parliament but from the king. Nominally responsible to the parliament, the cabinet owing to its mediaeval relation to the king, is practically all-powerful. In reality the parliament is but an empty show and the Cabinet carries on the government of the realm as the secretariat of the absolute monarch but under order of the City. The sovereign power in Britain sits neither at Westminster nor in the Buckingham palace but in the great counting houses of Lombard Street.

So very ambiguous, anomalous and self-contradictory is the British Constitution as permits eminent Jurists to hold the following diametrically opposite views about it.

In the opinion of Bentham, 'the British Constitution unites in itself all special vices of democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy'. Whereas, Blackstone holds that the British Constitution is the 'combination of the three forms of government uniting in itself all the good qualities of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy'.

The characterization by Bentham is nearer the mark. For, the British Constitution does not make any specific provision for what modern political philosophy considers to be fundamental rights of citizenship. In all modern democratic states freedom of person, speech, opinion, discussion and press is guaranteed by the fundamental Law. In England this freedom hangs in the air. On this very important subject Prof. Dicey writes:

> Yet this notion [about the freedom of persons etc.] is essentially false and conceals from students the real attitude of English law towards what is called freedom of thought and is more accurately described as the right of the free expression of opinion. The phrases freedom of discussion, or, liberty of press, are rarely found in any part of the statutes books nor among the maxims of common law . . . at no time has there been in England any proclamation on the right to liberty of thought or to freedom of speech.'

In order to attain in some indefinitely distant future, this none too inspiring state of political and civil freedom, the Indian people have already served nearly two hundred years of apprenticeship under the British Trustees and are enjoined to continue in the condition of wardship for an indefinite period. The law under which I am tried breeds the spirit of British Constitution in that it deprives the Indian people of such freedom as constitutes the fundamental rights of the citizenship of a modern state. In order to free themselves from the fetters of the British Constitution, the people of India must secure the complete separation of the country from imperialist Britain, and every available means is lawful to attain this object. British rule in India being maintained by force, national liberation of the Indian people will inevitably require the application of force.

Indians are asked to idealize this constitution of Plutocratic dictatorship hidden behind the sham of parliamentary democracy and the ugly ghost of medieval monarchy. It is to bask in the reflected glory of this hybrid constitution that the Indians are obliged to accept foreign imperialist domination as a perpetual arrangement as if it were ordained by God. They are expected always to remain docile step-children of mother Britannia implicitly obeying the so-called laws made on the authority of her antiquated constitution.

I represent those Indians who refuse this honour with thanks. Excepting those few whose fate is bound up with foreign imperialism, who get benefited by the colonial exploitation of the Indian masses, who have sold their national pride for a mess of pottage, the Indians want to work out their own destiny. They shall give their country a political system better than the musty British Constitution. They will not be satisfied with a puppet parliament at Delhi eventually set up by the dispensation of the sham at Westminister. Nor will they recognize the sovereignty of the British Crown even if some day it will be exercised through an Indian Viceroy. We will make our constitution not at any Round Table Conference in London but here in India in the midst of the struggle for the assertion of our right to self-determination. The British Crown presumes to deprive us of this inalienable right. So, the way to the establishment of a constitutional regime in India lies unavoidably through a revolutionary war against 1the British King who has usurped power in India. We are not making the war. It is waged against the Indian people by the British King. The Indians must fight in self-defence. Should the Indian people have democratic freedom and unrestricted progress in all branches of their national life, they must travel the road of revolution just as it has been done by all the peoples who stand at the van of modern civilization.

The essence of the charge against me is that I have tried to organize a violent revolution for the overthrow of the British Government of India. The issue involved in trials like this is the right of the oppressed people to revolt against and overthrow the imperialist state. The British King is but the emblem of imperialism which oppresses and exploits the Indian people. The theory of conspiracy is but a legal pretext. This trial is an expression of the conflict between popular will and the established law, a conflict which stands for political progress. The conflict must end in a violent clash, unless the established law is changed according to the will of the people. But laws of maintenance of a given state are in their turn defended by the coercive machinery, namely the police, and courts and finally the army. The process of political evolution is inevitably subject to periodical violent outbreaks, because of the resistance of the established order. As a matter of fact, sudden changes from the quantitative to qualitative, that is violent outbreaks, are inherent in the process of evolution in every sphere of existence. This has been definitely established by epoch-making discoveries of natural science. The theory of gradual evolution is exploded by modern science. There can be no evolution without revolution. The responsibility for the use of violence lies not with the new forces of progress but with the reactionary established order. On this subject the English historian Gardiner writes the following in the introduction to his history of Puritan Revolution and the Great Civil War.

'Revolutions, no less than smaller political changes are to be accounted for as steps in the historical development of nations. They are more violent and of longer duration in proportion to the stubborn resistance offered to them by the institutions which in their way stand.'

The point of departure of all my propaganda and action is that foreign domination hinders the progress of the Indian people in every branch of life; therefore, they must be free nationally. By no concept of modern political philosophy can a people be denied the right of severing the connection with another, particularly when this connection means subjugation of the one by the other. Whether the necessary separation should be by violent or non-violent means does not depend upon the people wanting to be free. It depends upon the one that holds the other in subjugation. Let the British gracefully withdraw from our country; then there would be no need for using violent means for securing its separation from imperialist Britain. The people of India are obliged to employ violence in their struggle for national freedom, and political and social progress, because British imperialism does not let them be free and progress peacefully. In more than one document exhibited here I have made it clear that we are not in favour of violence by choice; that the Indian people must adopt violent means obligatorily unless they would remain in perpetual colonial slavery. Much is made of the passages in the memorandum to the conference for organizing a working class party (exh. 13): 'It is ridiculous to say that we are non-violent revolutionaries . . . the expropriators will never give in without resistance, nor will the British leave India out of respect for the non-violent principle upon which our party is based. It should be dropped from our programme.' In holding this view I was simply guided by the lessons of history as well as by the objective reality of the relations of forces at the bottom of our struggle for national freedom. The truth contained in the statement cannot be challenged by putting me in prison. Others will tell the truth. The onus is upon the British rulers of our country to prove that it is not the truth. So far, their actions have only added force to my statement.

I have proved that revolutions are periodical violent outbreaks inherent in the process of evolution in the sphere of existence. So, it is but a logical statement that revolutionaries cannot believe in non-violence. The basic principle of the party of the working class is the economic emancipation of the toiling masses. Labour creates all new values. So, the parasitic possessing classes cannot exist and thrive except upon the product of their (producing class) labour, that is, except by expropriating the producers. Should the producing masses want to have the full value of their labour, they are sure to run up against the resistance of the parasitic possessing classes. They are entrenched behind laws, protecting their interest through their Law Courts which are at their disposal. Therefore a party standing for the economic emancipation of the workers and peasants, demanding that the toiler should get the full value of his labour, cannot make a creed of non-violence. By its very nature, it is bound to meet the resistance of those who live and prosper upon exploitation.

The following sentence makes it clear that eventual application of violence is in view only as unavoidable necessity. It is specified that the suggested dropping of the term 'Non-violence' from our programme 'will by no means commit us to acts of premature violence'. This specification proves that violence will be applied only as a last resort when it will be unavoidable owing to the stubborn resistance of the established order.

I have not tried to invent 'a violent revolution' out of my perverse imagination or acting as 'agent' of the Communist International. Whatever propaganda I made, and action I recommended, are warranted by the objective conditions of the country. Among the exhibits there is a book by me. I am afraid that neither the Judge nor the assessors have had or will have the time to read the whole book which is rather large. This book (*India in Transition*) was written in 1921. In it are formulated the basic principles by which all my propaganda and actions have since been governed. The question of revolution is dealt with at length in the book. To make my position clear I shall read out some extracts from the book.

On Page 142 occurs the following:

> The growing consciousness of its class interests makes the working class a powerful revolutionary factor, which will take part in the struggle for national freedom, in pursuit of its ultimate economic and social liberation . . . The experienced British bourgeoisie which stands behind the Indian Government, does not fail to make clear survey of the social process underlying the revolutionary movement; and will avail itself of the inevitable results of the class contradictions and antagonisms in the national movement, if the awakening of the working class is not led on to the revolutionary path according to its class interest. This is a task which appears to be beyond the wisdom and sagacity of the nationalist leaders and naturally calls for a political party of the working class.

Further on page 143:

> It is the development of large-scale industry which is going to determine the future of India. The revolution has already begun and, marching with gigantic strides, is disrupting the undermined structure of the villages and building huge cities whither the hopeless wage-slaves are being driven by the force of circumstances. The vast masses of wage-slaves which long since came into existence in the organism of the Indian society reduced to capitalist exploitation, are in a process of concentration. The scattered forces are being mobilized into solid ranks. The consequence of this social readjustment cannot remain unfelt. In fact, it is already manifesting itself very powerfully. It is mass awakening that has at last given real

> potentiality to the movement for national liberation, and it is the organized class-conscious proletariat, aided by the pauperized peasantry which will lead the national struggle to a successful end . . . before the workers there is nothing but struggle. It is he, having nothing to lose but his chains, on whom ultimately depends national freedom; but national freedom does not mean anything to him unless it brings into its train economic and social emancipation. National liberation of India is but a prelude to a greater thing—the social emancipation of the working class.

These extracts completely shatter the prosecution theory that I proposed to organize a Workers' and Peasants' Party or a People's Party as an instrument of the conspiracy to deprive the King of his sovereignty of India. My object was briefly stated in the motto with which the 'VANGUARD' appeared '*Not the masses for revolution but revolution for the masses.*' The prosecution maintains that I desired to use the workers and peasants for a revolution invented by myself or the Communist International. The evidence proves just the contrary, that I pointed out the inevitability of a revolutionary change in social and political conditions of India and that the welfare of the toiling masses was dependent upon the revolution. I have been working for the welfare of the Indian masses and advocated the elimination of all obstacles in the way to that goal. I tried to organize a working class party because it is necessary for the liberation of the masses from political slavery, economic exploitation and social degradation. The party is a historic necessity and has a historically revolutionary mission. It is neither a conspiracy nor a weapon in any conspiracy. The British King as well as any other power, that stand in the way of the progress and prosperity of the Indian masses, must go.

Of course our attempt to organize a party of the workers and peasants would be a quixotic venture, had the condition of the masses been really what the public prosecutor imagines it to be. In his opening address he told the assessors that the Indian peasants are happy in their misery and I was trying to disturb their happiness for some sinister purpose of mine. I have already given a few facts and figures that the happy peasants live only in the imagination of the public prosecutor, unless the gentleman would venture to advance a theory that the less one eats and the more one toils the happier he is. It has been observed in the course of this trial that there was no objection to a programme for the economic betterment of the masses. But any illegal action to enforce the programme would be punishable. Now the economic programme I advocated is contained in Exh. 9A (Read). I also maintained that no substantial improvement in the condition of the workers and peasants was possible before the overthrow of imperialist domination. Let the British Government of India prove that I made a defamatory charge, then I should be punished for making it. The programme was formulated in 1922. Since then a large part of it has received a general endorsement. It has been advocated from various quarters but not one single item of it has been realized. As the programme represents the minimum necessity for the very existence of the overwhelming majority of the Indian people, it must be realized. If it cannot be done with the sanction of the established law, other means will have to be employed obligatorily. When the choice before the masses is between starvation and obedience to laws of the ruling class they cannot make any mistake in the choice. Apparently the Government is the dog in the manger. It would not carry out a programme to which it could not object, but would punish as illegal its enforcement by others. In reality, the Government is against this harmless economic programme, for, its enforcement would mean loss to imperialism and its Indian allies, the Princes, big Landlords and Capitalists. Therefore, the realization of the programme will necessarily mean violation of these laws of the imperialist Government. The function of those laws is to hold the masses on the starvation level so that foreign imperialism and its native allies can grow rich, and to suppress the attempts of the masses to rise above the present conditions.

On page 108 of the book *India in Transition* occurs the following sentence, 'The victory will be won, not through suffering and sacrifice, but with blood and tears and will be maintained by blood and iron'.

The prosecution is likely to seize upon this passage as an evidence of my crime. But when read with reference to the context, the passage is found to have a meaning just the contrary to what it appears to have. The context is as follows:

> The Indian National Movement, actuated by the spirit of Gandhism cannot succeed, because, in that case it would defeat its own end. In spite of the pious desire of its leaders, post-British India cannot and will not be pre-British India. The Indian people will not be able to overthrow foreign imperialism, until and unless all that is cherished by the orthodox nationalists have become things of the past, of venerable memory. Sanctimonious antagonism to the 'satanic Western Civilization', a tendency, which in spite of its pathetic impotency, smacks of reaction, cannot be the life of a movement whose success will be marked by the crowning of the native bourgeoisie, who will prove to be as disruptive as the British, in so far as the social and religious ideals of orthodox nationalism are concerned. The victory of Indian nationalism will be the victory of the progressive middle class which may build a monument to the memory of the Mahatma for the valuable services he rendered them, involuntarily, but which will never share his pious indignation against Western civilization, which is after all only a stage of social development through which every human community has to pass.

From this context, it is evident that the expression 'with blood and tears' occurring in the above passage (quoted already) is meant to depict the painful events that must mark the dissolution of the decayed social order. What is meant is that the victory of the Indian bourgeoisie will surely bring about the painful conditions which were obtained in England in the earlier stages of industrial revolution. The other expression, 'Blood and iron' is also meant to depict the state of affairs under the rule of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The modern state of capitalist dictatorship, which the nationalist bourgeoisie would establish also in India, is cemented by the blood of the workers. Historically it is a figure of speech; in the contemporary epoch, it is so actually. The state of class dictatorship must be based upon armed forces just as in any other country.

I have not preached violent revolution. I have maintained that revolution is a historic necessity. From time to time, surging forces of social progress reach the period of a violent outburst. This is caused by the resistance of the old to the new. An impending revolution produces its pioneer who forces events and heralds the maturing of the conflict. The task of the revolutionary vanguard is to expedite the historical process caused by the objective necessity. They consciously organize the objective forces of the revolution and lead them to victory. I have acted as a pioneer of the Indian revolution; but the revolution itself is not my invention. It grows out of the objective historical conditions of the country. I have simply been one who perceived it earlier than others.

Holding such a dynamic view of the revolution, I could not possibly be a conspirator. As a matter of fact I always maintained that revolution was not a conspiracy, nor conspiratorial activities are always necessarily revolutionary. Consequently, I have been opposed to secret activities and acts of individual terrorism. Political assassination has no place in my theory and practice of revolution. My position in this matter is clearly stated on page 212 of the book *India in Transition*. I quote the following passage:

> Their organization (that is secret societies) could be crushed or prevented from constituting any serious danger, because they relied more upon conspiracies than upon revolutionary social forces.

Again on page 217:

> The eminent spontaneous upheaval of the working masses both in the city as well as in the countryside would open up a new vision to the de-classed young intellectuals dissipating their energy in futile conspiracy.

These passages clearly differentiate the revolutionary mass organization. I have not tried to build it up from conspiratorial activities. I have not tried to manufacture a revolution and to use the workers and peasants as raw materials for my sinister fabrication nor do I believe that the secret association of a few individuals can serve the purpose of a revolution. My approach to the matter is not subjective. My propaganda and other activities have been based upon an analysis of the objective conditions inevitably making for a revolution. Therefore, I could never be a conspirator. I am too much of a revolutionary to be a conspirator.

Now I shall quote a passage from my booklet *India's Problem* (one of the exhibits in the case). My views about revolution are rather comprehensively stated there. The passage will also show how incompatible are my views with conspiratorial activities.

I am quoting from page 1 the following:

> The government which rules in the interest of the foreign exploiting class, must be the objective of the first onslaught because this foreign domination has been the immediate cause of the backwardness of the Indian people. Colonial exploitation by imperialist capital prevented normal economic development of the country, and a backward state of economic development is not conducive to the growth of political consciousness of a people. Thus the British rule of India has been responsible for the thwarting of the free play of the forces of progress that are inherent in every human community. If the very existence of the British government is threatened today it is not because the people of India have suddenly made up their mind to free themselves from foreign thraldom, but because the inexorable forces of progress inherent in the organism of the Indian society—the forces that have been temporarily cramped by the British domination amongst other agencies—are asserting themselves. The political aspect of the Indian movement, the desire for the national freedom, the enthusiasm to fight for swarajya, therefore rests upon the background of the upheaval of the mighty forces. The latter are the root causes of all that is happening in India today. Their development will determine the trend and consequences of the political struggle.

The propaganda I carried on between 1921–4 was undoubtedly revolutionary, but it had absolutely nothing to do with conspiracy. I maintained that the progress of the Indian people was conditional upon their freedom from imperialist domination. It is for my prosecutors to prove that it is not so, that imperialist exploitation does not block the progress of the Indian masses. I also express the opinion that the foreign conquerors would never leave our country voluntarily. Let the British Government prove that my opinion is wrong. I did not, however, conspire to deprive the British King of the sovereignty which he does not possess. His is the right of conquest and usurpation. Ours is the right of revolt and self-determination.

The burden of the prosecution evidence is that I hold certain revolutionary political and social views, that I have propagated these views and that I have tried to organize a party of the working class with the object of putting those views into practice. I admit all this but I maintain that the evidence does not establish the charge against me. My conviction of this evidence would mean an·attack upon the freedom of opinion, expression and association.

I do not make secret of my determination of helping the organization of the great Revolution which must take place, in order to open up before the Indian masses the road to liberty, progress and prosperity. The impending revolution is a historic necessity. Conditions for it are maturing rapidly. *Colonial exploitation of the country creates those conditions. So, I am not responsible for the revolution nor is the Communist International.* Imperialism is responsible for it. My punishment, therefore, will not stop the revolution. Imperialism has created its own gravedigger, namely, the objective forces of national revolution. These will continue operating till their historic task is accomplished. No law, however ruthless may be the sanction behind it, can suppress them.

Then the adjective 'violent' is superfluous in the case of revolution, for revolution by its very nature implies violence. The object of a revolution is to overthrow the established social order buttressed upon a particular type of political state. The function of the state is to suppress and coerce all opposition to the established order. The essence of the state-power is violence. A revolution, that is, radical social and economic transformation of a community, according to the need of the given epoch, is therefore conditional upon the overthrow of the state defending the established order. Consequently, by its very nature, revolution is inseparable from violence. The resistance of the established order is responsible for it.

What I have just stated briefly is learnt from the experience of all the modern civilized peoples; and the lesson is learnt more from the history of England than any other country. The period of great revolutions that built up the modern civilization on the basis of the Renaissance, began in England. The English philosopher John Locke was an ideologist of the great revolution that cleared away the debris of the middle ages and laid the foundation of the modern world. I am going to cite the authority of Locke to prove that the sum total of the prosecution evidence, namely the attempt to organize the forces of an impending revolution, is no offence, but on the contrary, it is a political necessity in the given condition of India.

First I shall quote Locke's opinion that a government like the British Government of India can have no legal authority. He writes:

> Those who have the supreme power of making law in England, France, Holland are to an Indian but like the rest of the world, men without authority . . . I see not how the Magistrate of any community can punish an alien of another country, since in reference to him they can have no more power than any man naturally may have over another.

Locke wrote this towards the end of the seventeenth century, just when the European powers were establishing their domination over foreign peoples. The Indians are no less aliens to England today than at the time of Locke. So, according to Locke, this trial is illegal. Having power in their possession, the British rulers of India can punish me only as any man can punish another in the lawless state of nature.

The British Government of India is based upon the right of conquest; according to Locke, 'Conquest is nothing but the application of brute force to the regulation of human relations'. On this question he further writes:

> Many have mistaken the force of arms for the conquest of people and reckon conquest, without any more ado, conveyed a right of possession. Should a robber break into my house, and with a dagger at my throat, make me sign deeds to convey my estates to him, would this give him any title? Just such an alien by his sword has conquered me, who forces me into submission. The injury and the crime is equal whether committed by the wearer of a crown or some petty villain. The title of the offender and the number of his followers make no difference in the offence, unless it be to aggravate it.

Locke holds that a government established by conquest cannot claim the protection of law, and the conquered people are entitled to overthrow it by force. In his opinion the conqueror is in a state of war with the subjugated people and no normal law is applicable under such conditions. He writes:

> I say, using force upon the people without authority is a state of war with the people. When they are hindered by any force from what is so necessary to the society (that is making law with public consent), the people have a right to remove it by force. In all states and conditions the true remedy of force without authority is to oppose force. The use of force without authority always puts him that uses it into a state of war as the aggressor and renders him liable to be treated accordingly.

How very applicable is this principle of Locke to the present situation in India, is evidenced by one single fact. Any Indian would come under the purview of the new press Law and be punished with imprisonment and forfeiture of security for reading in public or printing extracts from Locke's Treatises on the Civil Government. One of the greatest British rulers of India himself testifies that Indian people are fully justified in acting upon and following the teachings of force. I mean Lord Curzon who laid down the dictum that 'India was won by the sword and must be held by the sword'. The pretender to the Prime Ministry of his Britannic Majesty, Mr Winston Churchill is also honest enough to tell frankly this truth about Britain's relation to India. The corollary to the Curzonian doctrine which is the guiding principle of the British rule of India, is that there can never be rule of law, where the sword of the conqueror is the law. This establishes my contention that the people of India can never be free except through a revolution which must necessarily be violent in order to be able to overwhelm the established order of imperialist violence. So, the acts for which the prosecution wants to have me punished are justified not only on the authority of the liberal democratic philosopher, Locke; they are justified even by the imperialist aristocrat Curzon.

Instead of giving any more quotations I would tender the entire treatise by Locke on the Civil Government as evidence for my defence. Not knowing whether it is allowed by the technicalities of the law of procedure. I shall content myself with citing one or two more characteristic passages from the work which is the foundation of modern political thought in England. By way of establishing the legitimacy of the use of force by people against Government not set up by themselves, and to free themselves from the usurpation of the tyranny which has been brought upon them, Locke wrote:

'No Government have the right to obedience from a people who have not freely consented to it'.

'It is plain that he that conquers in an unjust war can thereby have no title to the subjection and obedience of the conquered'.

And finally, 'it is plain that shaking off a power which force and not right hath set over any one, though it hath the name of rebellion, yet is no offence'.

So, the spiritual mentor of England would not convict me. He set up this theory of revolt which electrified the rising bourgeoisie not only of England but of the Continent as well in their struggle against absolute monarchy. But the progeny of the same John Locke established their domination by force upon the people of India and rules them for nearly two hundred years despotically without their consent.

The charge against me represents a gross violation of the Indian people's right to liberty, to set up their own Government responsible to themselves in the place of the present despotic foreign regime. But refuting the absurd charge, *I have purposely not called in the evidence of foreign and frankly revolutionary authorities.* They assail more mercilessly the claim of predatory imperialism to constitutional sovereignty and to the protection of the so-called law which is nothing but the bond of slavery for the Indian people. I have relied exclusively upon liberal English thinkers and respectable constitutional lawyers to establish my case. I justify what I have held and done on the unchallengeable authority of Locke, Hume, Bentham and Bagehot, Dicey and even Blackstone. You cannot punish me unless you proscribe the writings of these political philosophers and constitutional lawyers as seditious, revolutionary and treasonable. I may be punished nevertheless. I am the victim of a system which knows no other law than the law of coercion and violence. But I may warn this Court in the words of another historian of the British Constitution. Referring to the case of Hampden, Lord John Russel wrote: 'The Judges in the Westminster Hall decided against him but the country was roused and overbalanced by their sympathy for the judgement of a Court of Law.'

The term 'Imperialism' frequently occurs in the documents exhibited and the overthrow of Imperialism is advocated. I shall now explain what is Imperialism and why it should be overthrown.

Imperialism

Modern imperialism is the subjugation of the economically backward peoples by advanced capitalist states. European adventurers found their way to India in search of the fabulous riches of the Orient. The earliest stages of British relation with India bear the stamp of the barbarian plunder of a prosperous land. Until then, India was economically no more backward than her conquerors. Before long the balance turned. The discovery of steam as a motive power ushered in the industrial revolution in England. Mechanical means of production were invented in quick succession. England became the workshop of the world. The phenomenal success of the industrial revolution in England was largely due to the influx of silver from the new world and to the wealth robbed from India.

Modern imperialism is the outcome of the capitalist production. In course of time the home market cannot absorb all the commodities produced. Not that the people at home are plentifully supplied, but increased supply tends to bring down prices thereby reducing the rate of profit. Capitalism is the production of commodities to be sold at the highest profit. Therefore constant expansion of market is an essential condition for capitalist prosperity. Foreign market must be found as soon as the home market is glutted.

England from the very beginning had to find a foreign market for her manufactured goods. She had plentiful supply of coal, but she was poor in many other raw materials and she had a very small population. Owing to this peculiarity of her position England became the workshop of the world, rose as the greatest maritime power and free trade became the cardinal principle of her fiscal policy.

In course of time there was not only surplus manufactured commodities to be exported from England. What was more important was that she had come to possess surplus capital. That is, the British bourgeoisie accumulated more capital than could be invested at home without bringing down the rate of profit. So not only goods but capital also had to be exported. Capital irresistibly seeks investment where the highest profit can be made, that is where labour is cheap and the price of land low. Both these conditions obtained in the industrially backward countries; consequently these become the objects of modern imperialist exploitation through the export of capital. Backward countries are thus brought under the political domination of imperialist states on the familiar pretext of 'White man's burden', 'Civilizing mission', 'Trusteeship', etc.

The ordered and peaceful conditions established in India by the British rulers were not for the welfare of her population. Primarily they were necessary for the expansion of British trade. When the time came for the British capital to be invested in India, the political power over the country was assumed directly by the British Crown. In the last half of the nineteenth century the flow of capital from England to India increased. The much vaunted 'Civilizing mission' of the British rule was performed. Railways were constructed, extensive irrigation works built, ports and harbours improved and lately modern industry introduced. The object of the great 'Civilizing mission', however, was to bring the cheap labour of India under the exploitation of the British capital.

The total amount of British capital invested in India still remains an unknown category. It has however been estimated at being from £10,000,000 to £15,000,000. The total net profit made by England out of India during the last half a century (leaving the plunder of the earlier period out of account) is many times more than the capital actually invested. Then lately, new investment did not imply actual money coming from England. The profit made in India was reinvested. Still this fictitious investment today constitutes India's obligation to England. To protect this is a basic function of the British Government of India. The elaborate 'Safeguards and reservations' in the projected reforms are all meant for this purpose. The concrete result of the British rule in India is a net profit for England of about 250 crores of rupees a year.

Capital exported to the Colonies is mainly employed in trade. Through the improvement of the means of transport and of the machinery of distribution, all the available product of the country is brought within the compass of the competitive world market.

Increase of export raises the purchasing capacity of the country. But expansion is only apparent. No real expansion is possible unless production increases, and production cannot substantially increase except through the introduction of the higher means of production. In other words, industrial development alone really increases the purchasing power of a country. But this is not permitted in a colonial country. During the fifty years preceding the World War the foreign trade of India expanded phenomenally. But the increase of her production was far from being of similar dimension. This being the case the profit of the expanded trade as well as of the British capital invested to foment it, was derived by depriving the producing masses practically of their entire surplus produce. The result of the artificially inflated foreign trade was progressive pauperization of the masses and the ruin of the entire national economy.

The influx of capital from England quickened Indian trade which was necessarily carried on through native middlemen. These automatically got a considerable share of the colonial plunder of the Indian masses. In the absence of modern credit system, usury became a very lucrative investment for native capital which was thus withheld from productive employment. The native bourgeoisie, therefore, grew as a partner in the system of imperialist exploitation, having their accumulated wealth employed mostly in trade, usury and non-productive landholding. They acquired a stake in the system of capitalist exploitation based mainly on pre-capitalist production. Deriving their benefit from the existing system of backward economy they cannot advocate its destruction which is the first condition for normal industrial development without which the economic conditions of the masses of our country cannot be improved.

The great World War waged to further imperialist ambition accentuated the contradictions of colonial economy. It seriously dislocated the entire system of colonial exploitation. Already before the war the pauperization of the Indian masses had gone very far. The process was expedited by the additional burden imposed on the ordinary Indian masses for contributing to the expenses of the War. Consequently, as soon as the short post-war boom period was over, the bankruptcy of the bulk of the Indian customer became evident. India's 'obligations' to England are discharged year by year through the surplus of export over import. The surplus suddenly disappeared. There was a heavy adverse balance. After two years of feverish efforts the balance was re-established in 1922 by artificially reducing import. Just when British industries needed greater market it contracted even in the monopolist sphere. The insistence upon collecting colonial booty was directly antagonistic to the interest of home industries. The booty was collected just the same. The top-heavy conditions of the imperialist structure was revealed. Its collapse was inevitable.

This was the background of the great upheaval of 1920–22, which took the form of the non-cooperation movement. Out of that background of bankrupt colonial exploitation rose the historic necessity for the organization of a people's party or a workers' and peasants' party with the immediate object of fighting for national freedom which meant complete separation of India from imperialist Britain. Whether that object could be realized through violent or non-violent means depended upon the attitude of the forces that stood in the way of that goal.

Imperialism of course, did not meet the situation with folded arms. The way out of the economic crisis was sought in the plan of rationalizing the colonial exploitation, so to say. Owing to the contraction of the world market in consequence of the war and the reduction of her share in it, Britain was in a severe industrial slump. She must now fall back upon her colonial reserve. If the purchasing power of India could be increased, there would be market for British manufacturers, but the old, classical, so to say, form of colonial exploitation did not permit any intrinsic expansion of the Indian market. For it obstructed the development of the forces of production in India, thereby keeping the masses on a very low standard of living. The purchasing capacity of India could not increase unless she was allowed to produce more with which to pay for larger purchase. Under the pressure of these circumstances the policy of imperialism became to promote the industrial development of India with British capital.

But presently there were new difficulties. Sufficient capital for carrying out the new policy was not available from England. Severe industrial crisis had reduced the rate of accumulated capital which could be exported from England. So, the plan of rationalizing the colonial exploitation of India came to grief.

Meanwhile the productivity of India stagnated. Imperialism sought the way out of the crisis in another direction in the rationalization of agricultural production. A Royal Commission was appointed to explore the field. But the Commission was not given the power to suggest any change in semi-feudal pre-capitalist landownership which is the basic obstacle to any substantial increase of agricultural production. On the other hand, retarded growth of modern industry and disruption of handicrafts have caused heavy overcrowding on the land. The peasant holdings are so small as do not permit the employment of any modern means of production. Further, the fact that practically the entire surplus produce is taken away from him in the form of rent, taxes (direct and indirect) feudal levies, usurious interests, makes the peasant entirely unable to improve the mode of cultivating the soil. Under these conditions of uneconomic landholding and progressive pauperization of the peasant masses, the project of rationalizing the agricultural production could not be carried out. Therefore, the recommendations of the Agricultural Commission remained on paper.

Replacement of the wooden plough, now in use generally, by the modern steel implements and the introduction of other modern agricultural machinery, would on the one hand open up an extensive market for the British iron and steel industry and on the other hand increase the total volume of the Indian agricultural produce. This in its turn would raise the purchasing power of India, thereby contributing to the British trade. This cannot happen unless Indian peasants are in a position to buy modern implements of cultivation. Any substantial increase of India's agricultural production therefore is conditional upon the peasantry being relieved considerably of the burdens that today grind them down to the state of progressive pauperization. This condition can be created on the one hand by encroaching upon the imperialist booty and on the other by depriving the parasitic landlords of their unearned income. In short, the entire system of colonial exploitation must go before any improvement can take place in the agricultural productivity of India.

Lately the crisis has been still further aggravated by external causes. General crisis of world capitalism has brought down heavily agricultural prices. As a predominantly agrarian country, India has been very hard hit by this. Suddenly the meagre purchasing power of the bulk of her population has declined by half. Imports into India are mostly paid for by the export of the agricultural products. A heavy fall in the price of these has caused a corresponding drop in her capacity to purchase foreign commodity. The value of the total foreign trade of India declined in 1930 to 433 crores of rupees as against rupees 578 in the preceding year. Four years ago the figure had been 633 crores. The fall in agricultural prices even below the cost of production rendered the peasantry utterly unable to discharge their 'obligations' (rent, taxes, interests, etc.). In consequence of this economic depression and disorganization, there is a heavy deficit in the Government budget. In view of the extreme poverty of the masses any new taxation will make the situation worse. Still in a desperate plight the Government has decided to impose heavy indirect taxes (import duty). The effect of this measure will be a further rise in the prices of imported commodities. The discrepancy between agricultural and industrial prices will grow wider. The purchasing power of the peasant masses will further decline. The revolutionary crisis will ripen.

Thus the crisis in the Indian economy brought about by imperialist exploitation defies all efforts to overcome it by peaceful means. It is bound to develop into a revolutionary situation. The overthrow of imperialism and its native allies is indispensable in this situation. In the state of helpless economic bankruptcy the workers and peasants, artisans and small traders, employees and poor intellectuals, together constituting nearly ninety per cent of the Indian population, must choose between decay, degradation and slow death from starvation on the one hand and revolt against the established order on the other. I tried to organize a people's party as the organ of this maturing revolt of the masses.

In this situation of a maturing revolutionary crisis, imperialism seeks a compromise with the Indian bourgeoisie, but in this period of decay and decline, it cannot forego the smallest share of the colonial reserve. Its desire is to intensify the exploitation of the Indian masses as the means to prop up its tottering structure. But in order to enlist the support and services of the nationalist bourgeoisie, imperialism must make them some concession. The Indian bourgeoisie however will in no case be permitted to aggrandize themselves at the cost of the share of imperialism. As a guarantee for this, supreme political power will be retained by the British. The projected federal constitution will place the legislatures so much at the mercy of the feudal princes and other reactionary elements as will obviate any attack upon the unearned income of the parasitic landowners. So any concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie will mean greater exploitation of the masses.

Any substantial expansion of the productivity of labour being impossible under the present condition, any increase in the gain of the native bourgeoisie can take place only by robbing the masses still more of their very meagre surplus produce, that is by further pauperizing them. Fiscal autonomy, granted to British India will tell adversely upon the declining trade, long before the problematic stimulus to industrial development is felt. So, even the distant goal is out of any hope to the Indian masses. Therefore these must take their destiny in their own hand. They must forge their own weapon in the struggle which is not of their creation. To lead them in this historical struggle for existence they need a political party of their own. I have laid down the ideological foundation of this historically necessary party. If for this 'offence' I shall be punished, the sentence will be announced not against me personally, but against the hungry multitude to whose strivings I have given an expression.

A programme proposed to the session of the National Congress at Gaya in 1922 is exhibited as evidence for the offence I am alleged to have committed. The programme advocated National Revolution. I shall explain what is National Revolution and why it is an objective necessity.

The National Revolution

National freedom is not a thing by itself. It is the means to an end. India is in the throes of a revolution—in the process of rebirth. National independence is the first stage of this revolution. The people of India must be completely free from foreign domination in order to rebuild their country, to catch up with the tremendous progress made by other nations while they remained in political bondage and the consequent economic backwardness. The nations standing at the van of modern civilization, all underwent revolutionary changes in one time or another during the last three hundred years. Similar changes must take place in India if she is to rank in the category of the modern civilized nations. Otherwise she will go down in the struggle for existence. She cannot survive the present economic crisis unless her social structure undergoes a revolutionary readjustment. Her decayed social structure is buttressed upon the imperialist state, itself providing in its turn the condition for the colonial exploitation of the masses of her people. Therefore imperialist domination must be overthrown so that all the avenues of progress and prosperity are opened before her people.

Even the very immediate interests of the workers, peasants and oppressed and exploited strata of the population demand complete National Independence. The entire burden of colonial exploitation falls upon their back. Their present miserable condition cannot be even partially improved so long as India will remain a British colony even if she may eventually be raised to the status of a self-governing dominion. Such an eventual readjustment of the relations between the two countries will not break the chain of gold that binds the Indian masses to the colonial slavery. Even the silken cord of love will be but gilding the chain of slavery, as far as the masses of the population are concerned. Constitutional reforms even to the extent of dominion status, or shadow of 'Independence' considered by some to be its 'substance', will not diminish but intensify the exploitation of the masses. Voluntarily, imperialism will never part with the least part of its booty. Fiscal autonomy will not stop the drain of wealth from the country. It will mean greater exploitation of the masses. Tariff walls will force prices up. Industrial development taking place essentially under colonial conditions cannot raise the standard of living of the masses. Young Indian capitalism can hold its own against foreign competition only with the help of cheap labour and cheap raw-materials. So, any industrial development of India within the framework of colonial economy, will not improve the conditions of the workers and peasants. On the one hand, it will not cause any increase of wage and on the other the prices of agricultural products will be forced down. Not only will the conditions of the workers and peasants grow worse, but the artisans will also be further ruined having to face the competition of commodities manufactured by machine with cheap labour; and further destruction of what still remains of handicraft will also ruin the small rural traders connected with this industry. Middle class intellectual employees and small traders living in the town will have to bear the burden of heavy taxation.

In its frantic efforts to save itself from the inevitable collapse imperialism must draw fully upon its colonial reserve. The cheap labour of the Indian workers must be exploited to the very utmost. The Indian working class will thus be kept always on the level of bare subsistence. The native capitalists are a party to the violent suppression and exploitation of the working class, because the basis of their prosperity also is unpaid labour. Intensified exploitation of the Indian masses will cement the alliance between foreign imperialism and the native bourgeoisie. Therefore the workers and peasants and all other toiling elements of the population together constituting the ninety per cent of the population of India must fight for complete national independence.

Now, I shall explain what is meant by the Agrarian Revolution, advocated in the documents produced to prove my offence. In an economically backward country like India, Agrarian Revolution is the essence of National Revolution.

Agrarian Revolution

Land is the principle means of production in India. Over seventy per cent of the population are employed in the cultivation of the soil. Agriculture is the premier industry of the country. Consequently, any economic improvement is primarily conditional upon the radical readjustment of the relation of the property in land. The nation enters the stage of modern civilization by abolishing the antiquated non-productive feudal landownership. This is essential for creating conditions for an unrestricted development of the new source of production as the basis of greater prosperity and higher progress of the nation.

In India one-third of the land belongs to the fedual princes and in about half of the territory directly under British administration the ownership of land belongs to the government. The peasants cultivating it are formally free from feudal burden but colonial exploitation reduced them to the position of serfs, and indeed of wage-slaves; rent and taxes, (direct and indirect) and usurers' interest absorb practically the entire surplus produce of their labour.

The disruption of handicraft and slow growth of modern industry have caused an excessive pressure of population on the land. Owing to this, millions of peasants work on what is called 'uneconomic holdings', that is to say they toil on such small bits of land as do not provide the barest means of subsistence to the toilers. This is a bare waste of labour. The basic condition for national prosperity is that every worker produces more than what is necessary for his maintenance. Under normal conditions, the huge amount of labour today wasted on these uneconomic holdings would be diverted to more remunerative modern modes of production. Colonial exploitation prevents such redistribution of land as is essential for national prosperity.

There are peasants much more numerous in number, tens of millions, who are hardly in a better position. Deep in debt they remain year in and year out, always lingering on the verge of starvation. Their harvests are mortgaged or even sold in advance to guarantee the payment of usurers' dues in addition to the rents and taxes. This kills in them the incentive to work. Why should they work harder and produce more when however much they may produce with their primitive tools their share would always be hardly enough to keep starvation away from their door? When large masses of peasants are in such condition, agricultural production of the country inevitably declines, causing contraction of trade and thereby injuring the entire national economy. The liquidation of the indebtedness of the peasantry therefore is another condition for the economic progress of the nation. Besides, a close look at the situation will reveal the fact that such liquidation will not cause any real loss to anybody. Thanks to the exorbitant rates of interest and compound interests charged by the usurers, the recorded figure of indebtedness represents a huge inflation of the actual sum involved and, in most cases, the amount originally borrowed has been paid up often many times over. So the proposed liquidation while serving a very useful and beneficial purpose will scrap only some paper records which bind millions of peasants perpetually to actual slavery.

The solution of the agrarian problem is the essential condition for India becoming a modern industrial country. There can be no national prosperity so long as the great majority of the people remain in the state of economic bankruptcy. The entire social structure of the country must undergo a revolution. Antiquated means and mode of production should be discarded in favour of modern ones. This depends upon the disruption of the feudal, semi-feudal and akin forms of landownership which deprive the peasantry practically of their entire surplus produce. A specific mode of production cannot be discarded without disrupting the form of property with which it is related. The peasants will be able to improve their means and mode of cultivating land only when the larger part of the surplus remains in their possession.

The native states will be destroyed and feudal landlordism will be abolished representing a form of property that has become detrimental to the economic progress of the nation. The welfare of the nation demands this revolutionary measure. The minority profiting by the reactionary system must disappear from this parasitic existence. The total net income of the princes and big landlords is estimated to be rupees 180 crores a year. The wealth appropriated by this parasitic minority is not converted into productive capital. Most of it is either hoarded up as treasure, jewellery, ornaments etc., or is squandered in degenerating luxury. Part of it even goes out of the country to be invested abroad. This wealth, representing a considerable part of the total national income, should be detached from its present parasitic possessors and transferred to quarters where it will be a mighty stimulus for the economic life of the entire nation. Left in possession of a large share of the produce of their labour, the peasantry will be able to purchase more necessities of life. That will mean a tremendous incentive to trade and industry of the country. They will also be able to purchase modern tools and implements of cultivation. This will raise the productivity of land and labour, thereby continually quickening the economic life of the nation.

Nationalization of land by the revolutionary democratic state based on the control of the oppressed and exploited classes will preclude the possibility of its re-accumulation in the possession of a new class of capitalist landlords or rich farmers exploiting labour. The peasant will be the owner of the land he cultivates by virtue of his possession of the entire proceeds of his labour. He will be secure on the land he cultivates. He will be free from all charges and obligations except a fixed tax due to the state. The final solution of the agrarian problem is collective farming. Nationalization of the land will open the way in that direction.

The disorganization of the decayed feudal relations, the backwardness of the agricultural industry and the pauperization of the peasant masses are the result of the imperialist domination. The liberation of the Indian peasantry, therefore, is conditional upon the overthrow of imperialism.

My Connection with Communist International

Finally, I shall explain my connection with the Communist International. I do not deny this connection but I had not acted as the 'agent' of the Communist International, as the prosecution alleges. The evidence produced does not prove this senseless allegation. It proves that I have been a member of the Executive Committee of CI. That fact does not make me any more an 'agent' of the CI than a member of the

British Cabinet is an agent of British imperialism. The object of the allegation is to insinuate that the views I have propagated and the act I have committed do not rise out of the conditions of the country, but are extraneous matters. I shall explain that it is not so. Firstly, I am prosecuted for advocating not the Communist International programme but the programme of National Revolution. Secondly, as explained already, the forces of national revolution have been developing in India and the views I have propagated are but the ideological reflex of those forces. Thirdly, the communication from the Communist International exhibited in this case does not do anything more than welcome the growing forces of the National Revolution in India, draws the attention of the Indians to these forces growing in their own midst, and places at their disposal the lessons learnt from history of other peoples. Certain passages in the Communist International Manifesto to the Gaya Congress (Exhibited under No. 6 B, 7 B, 9 and 57) represent the pivot of the present prosecution case. These passages are:

> British rule in India was established by force and is maintained by force; therefore it can and will be overthrown only by a violent revolution. We are not in favour of resorting to violence, but for self-defence the Indian people must adopt violent means, without which the foreign domination based upon violence cannot be ended. The people of India are engaged in this great revolutionary struggle. The Communist International is wholeheartedly with them.

I have already demonstrated the objective truthfulness of the statement made in this passage. For the purpose, I have cited representative and influential spokesmen of British Imperialism. The onus to disprove the statement now rests upon imperialism. And imperialism is not at all anxious to do so. Three years of costly commissions, and conferences, of high hopes and idle illusions, of passive resistance and preoccupation of peace ending not even in the grant of provincial autonomy, add still greater force to statements like these:

'Goal however cannot be attained by negotiations or by peaceful means.'

'The people of India will never liberate themselves from the present slavery without a sanguinary struggle.'

'British imperialism cannot be overthrown without a violent revolution.'

All the statements made in the documents written in 1922 have been borne out to be true by events occurring since then, and by the bitter experience gained therefrom.

To the prosecution, the Communist International is like the man in Mars. Sweeping allegations are made about an organization without possessing the most elementary knowledge about its programme and constitution. The principal prosecution witness admitted that his informations about the Communist International were gathered from newspapers like *London Times*. Once upon a time, that newspaper published the sensational rumour that the Communist International had sanctioned 5,000,000 roubles for fomenting a revolution in India. On the strength of that rumour the paragraph 11 of the complaint in this case was drawn up. This 'Bolshevik Gold' totally disappears in the actual evidence produced.

It is alleged that the Executive Committee of the Communist International is a branch of the Communist International. As a matter of fact the executive committee is the governing body of the International Organization. Since the prosecution has given such distorted pictures of the body which is alleged to be the source of inspiration for all the offences committed by me, I find it necessary to describe briefly the devil of the drama.

There are Communist Parties in all the civilized countries of the world. These parties together compose the Communist International, in other words the International Communist Party. The parties in different countries are not the branches of the parent body. They are its component parts. There are about sixty such national parties. From time to time delegates elected by all these parties assemble in a world Congress to discuss and decide common problems. The Congress elects the executive committee which carries out the resolutions accepted by the Congress. The executive committee does not establish a branch organization in this or in that country. When a Communist Party comes into existence in a particular country, voluntarily it enters the International body and becomes a component part of it. The communists are the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. Their task is to educate, organize and lead the toiling masses in the struggle against capitalism. In the present world, the oppression of capitalism is not limited by national boundaries. Capitalism is an international force. So, the struggle against it must also be carried on internationally. Therefore communists are internationalists.

The resolution of the executive committee of the CI to establish a branch organization in India is a myth. If there really existed such a resolution, the prosecution could have easily produced it. All the resolutions of the Communist International are public documents. A Communist Party cannot spring up in India, simply by a resolution of the CI even if that resolution were backed up by 5 or 50 million roubles. Revolution is never made to order. Communists grew in India as in other countries, out of the background of class struggle, of the conditions of a developing revolution. The next step was for the Indian Communists to get together into a party with a programme appropriate to the condition in which they would have to work. After that as a Communist Party they were to enter the International Communist Organization. The prosecution puts the thing on its head and alleges that the process was reverse.

Myself personally had been a communist before I attended a World Congress of the Communist International. Long experience in the nationalist movement not only in India, but also in other subject countries gradually led me towards communism. Simultaneously many others were moving in the same direction. Those moving in the same direction must eventually come together. The various efforts made ever since the year 1920, for the organization of the working class party with different nomenclature—socialist Labour Party, Labour Swarajya Party, Congress Labour Party, Workers' and Peasants' Party and so on, indicated the growth of the Communist movement out of the background of the objective social condition. I participated in that historic process, not as an agent of an extraneous body, but as a part of it. Being a convinced communist, I was a member of the Communist International, and acted as such; but my actions were primarily the actions of a pioneer of the Communist Party of India.

Under the given conditions of India the Communist Party must rise as the vanguard of national revolution. The duty of the Communist Party is to stand in the forefront of national freedom. I tried to perform this duty by persistently advocating the right of the Indian people to self-determination, by pointing out the implications of the struggle for national freedom, by formulating the programme of national revolution, by agitating for the transformation of the National Congress into an organ for the revolutionary struggle against imperialism, by promoting the crystallization of a people's party out of the radical wing of the Congress and finally by helping the formation of a mass party of workers and peasants. The evidence in this case is the record of what I tried to do to help the process of historical development. The offence I am alleged to have committed represents a chapter of the history of India. You cannot sit in judgement upon history any more than you can order the Ganges to go back to its source.

Still the prosecution makes out the Communist to be the agents of an extraneous body, maliciously conspiring not only against. His Britannic Majesty but against India herself. In his opening address the public prosecutor gave an indication as to how he will interpret my connection wth the Communist International. Presumably he will follow the footprints of his predecessor in the 1924 Case and hold me up as the harbinger of the 'Red Ruin' to be caused in India on orders from Moscow. Otherwise there is no sense in describing me as an agent through whom the Communist International conspired to deprive the king of the Sovereignty of India.

The object of this malicious and misinformed interpretation of what I have done and said is to alienate the popular sympathy from me, while I am prosecuted for having advocated the freedom and welfare of the people. The public prosecutor for example has read in the evidence that I want to destroy the National Congress together with the British Government. What I proposed according to the documents produced is however not to destroy the National Congress but to strengthen it as the organ of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. There are a number of very important documents on record to prove this, namely Exhibits 9, 9A, 19 (2) and 19 (1) B. I have undoubtedly sought to liberate the National Congress from the reactionary influence which holds it back from the revolutionary struggle. And that attempt was directed not by desire to destroy the National Congress but strengthen it.

In the present state of Indian history the communist movement is not a factor foreign, much less antagonistic, to the general strivings for national freedom. The communists are internationalists. They know no national boundaries. They know that class antagonism cuts across the doctrine of homogeneous nationalism. Still there can be no internationalism, so long as the great majority of the world population are subjugated by a few imperialist powers. Freedom of the oppressed and exploited peoples is an integral part of the programme of the International Communist Party. The overthrow of imperialism, that is the harmful system of colonial exploitation, is a stage, vitally necessary in the historic struggle against class domination and for the establishment of communism. Therefore, in India the communist movement grows out of the nationalist movement and remains an integral part of it, the most advanced section, until the immediate goal of national freedom is realized.

In this connection I shall explain what is meant by a legal and illegal organization. This question of a dual organization is raised in two documents, exhibits 5 and 13. In the former it is stated as follows:

> Thus we will be on the high road towards the organization of a communist or socialist party which will not be a small sect but a great political force, because it will have the legal apparatus of the mass party preparing to capture the leadership of the Congress.

What was proposed was not that one should be law-abiding and the other revolutionary. I recommended that the proposed Communist Party should be organized underground, in the sense that its membership should not be publicly known, but there was to be no secret about the existence of the party itself. Its programme should also be publicly known. Precaution about its membership was necessary to protect them from prosecution. We did not choose such a state of affairs. We were forced to take that course by the nature of the established laws which deprive the Indian people of the elementary rights of citizenship enjoyed in every modern civilized country. Communist Parties exist legally in England as well as in the British Dominions. They advocate the overthrow of the established government through revolution. But this is not allowed by the British Government in India. The Communist Party, however, grows out of the objective conditions of the country. If it is not allowed to exist and function legally, it must do so under cover.

The theory has been advanced that the Government has nothing against communism as such. A definition of this permissible brand of communism is not given. What is meant presumably is that should the communists dwell on the theoretical attitude dreaming of a distant Utopia, they could be safely left alone. But even this is not allowed in practice. I shall give an instance. The other day, a number of books on communist theory came from America for me. These books are not proscribed in India. All over the world they are counted among the works on social and economic science, and are found in all the respectable libraries. The superintendent of Jail however exercised his discretion and did not let me have the books.

In any case, a communist party can be either a Communist Party or not a Communist Party. It cannot adapt itself to the queer notions of the British rulers of India. At this stage of the history of India, the function of the Communist Party is to act as a mighty lever of the struggle for national freedom. Failing to perform this function it will cease to be the Communist Party. Its mission is to develop the bourgeois–nationalist movement into a revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle. This being the case it cannot exist and function under the British Government of India with the sanction of its repressive laws.

The attempt of the communists to organize a mass party with such a minimum programme as might permit it a legal existence, with the object of using this legal party as the instrument of capturing the leadership of the National Congress, is also dictated by the terror of the imperialist laws. Mend your repressive laws, let the communists work as they are allowed to in other civilized countries, then there would be no need for an illegal organization. But the imperialist Government would never allow the communists the freedom of speech, movement and association, because, so long as the vanguard of the most revolutionary class is prevented from coming forward to give the anti-imperialist forces a fighting programme and determined leadership, the national movement with all its dangerous potentialities, can be kept under control with the clever imperialist tactics of repression and reconciliation—repression of the revolutionary mass movement and reconciliation with the bourgeois nationalists, afraid of the revolution.

In the present period of the history of our country the Communist Party is the spearhead, so to say, of the democratic national Revolution. The Communists are the object of ruthless imperialist repression because of this role of theirs. The government does not prosecute me only because I have tried to organize such a party with the object of securing complete separation of India from the British Empire. Had I had the good sense of preaching 'Communism as such', the government might have left me alone. Because in that case I would stultify my efforts in forming a small sect far removed from the realities of the day. I have incurred the displeasure of imperialism and have become the victim of its repressive laws because I have preached applied communism providing a broad platform for all the objectively anti-imperialist forces. So, I am prosecuted not as an agent of an extraneous body for conspiring to deprive the British King of his sovereignty of India. I am prosecuted as a representative of the oppressed and exploited people of India for the crime of having advocated their right to national freedom, economic prosperity and cultural progress.

While creating a broad platform on which not only workers and peasants but all the other oppressed and exploited classes, namely artisans, small traders, employees and toiling landowners and poor intellectuals can stand together in the fight for common interests, I have exposed, and criticized the reactionary factors and reformist tendencies in the nationalist movement. But the opposition is not from the point of view of communism but of national revolution. The sum and substance of the programme I have advocated which is endorsed today by millions, is as follows:

1. Complete liberation of the Indian people from imperialist yoke even in the fraudulent form of the 'silken Cord of Love';
2. Destruction of all the antiquated forms of property and social relations obstructing the modernization of the national economy and providing a social basis for the ruinous colonial exploitation;
3. Abolition of the parasitic pre-capitalist and primitive capitalist modes of production and distribution that pauperize the masses thereby ruining the entire country economically; and
4. Genuine Democratization of all the departments of national life through the transfer of real power to the masses.

I have exposed and denounced as enemies of national welfare the thin upper strata of the Indian population that oppose this programme of democratic National Revolution. But I have held that for the present and in the near future the Communists should not advocate wholesale confiscation of property nor should they declare war upon religion. Nowhere do the communists advocate the destruction of the family. It is capitalism which disrupts family as far as the toiling masses are concerned. In the communist society, the foundation will be laid for a new type of free family held together only by voluntary and therefore genuine affection. Any how, as far as India is concerned that is a far cry. Much ground will have to be covered before the Indian society reaches that stage. Meanwhile, abolition of family or destruction of religion does not enter into the programme of the Communist Party of India, any more than the canard about the nationalization of women. What we want now is to nationalize our country.

The communists do not conspire to deprive the British King of his sovereignty in India. They openly challenge the self-assumed sovereignty and call upon and organize the oppressed and exploited people to end this fiction. This is no offence. I have quoted authorities on modern political philosophy, jurisprudence and legislation in support of my contention. So, there has been no communist conspiracy. On the contrary these so-called Communist conspiracy cases represent a huge imperialist conspiracy against the Indian people.

The government knows that I have the popular sympathy because everything I have done had been for the welfare of the people. Therefore, I am placed under an iron blockade. A trial involving the vital constitutional issue as between the popular will and established law is taking place, behind prison walls. For the fear of popular demonstration in my favour, I am not tried in the open court. It would be a singular sight, the imprisoned rebel becoming an object of popular ovation. That should expose the arbitrariness of the law under which I am tried. I am tried for offence against the state, but the judge is an official of the same state. The only guarantee for fair trial in such cases is the jury. I am deprived of trial by my own peers because the government knows that no Indian jury would find me guilty. I may be convicted by this imperialist court but the seeds I have sown will bear fruit and I will be vindicated by the Indian people.

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This bibliography includes most of the periodicals, reports, proceedings, books etc. which have been cited or drawn upon in *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Volumes I–III. However, it is not a comprehensive bibliography nor have I listed articles quoted from or mentioned. SNR.

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British Museum, London
Editor's private collection of rare books, periodicals, photocopies, microfilms and microfiche.
Harvard University Library, Harvard
Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford
India Office Library, London
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International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam
Library of the Congress, Washington DC
National Archives of India, New Delhi
National Library, Calcutta
Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
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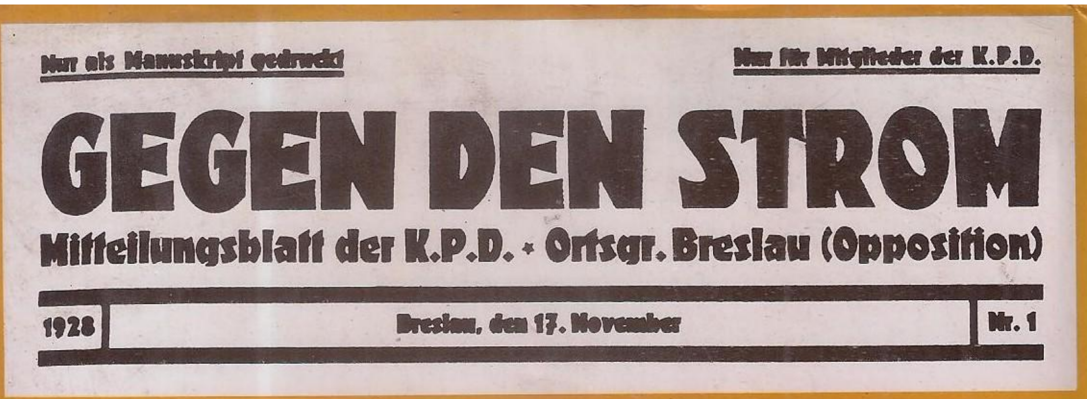

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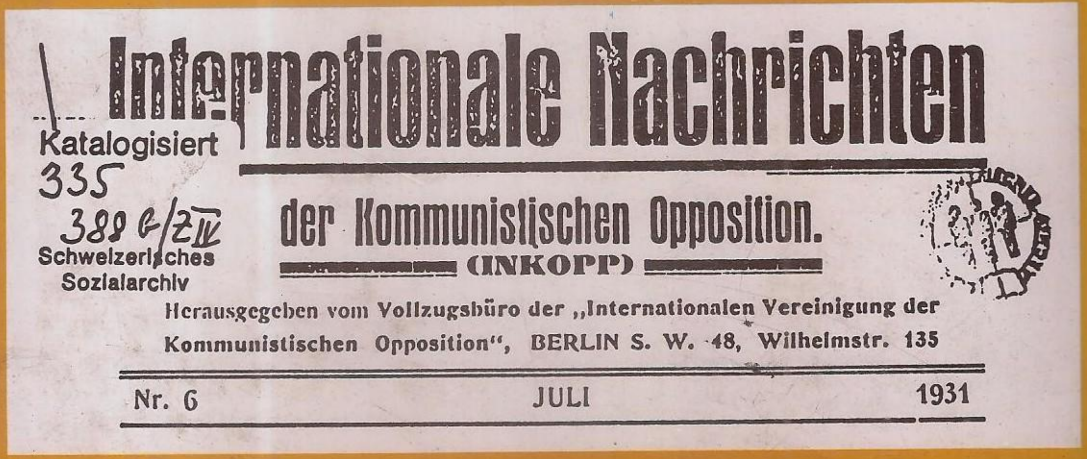

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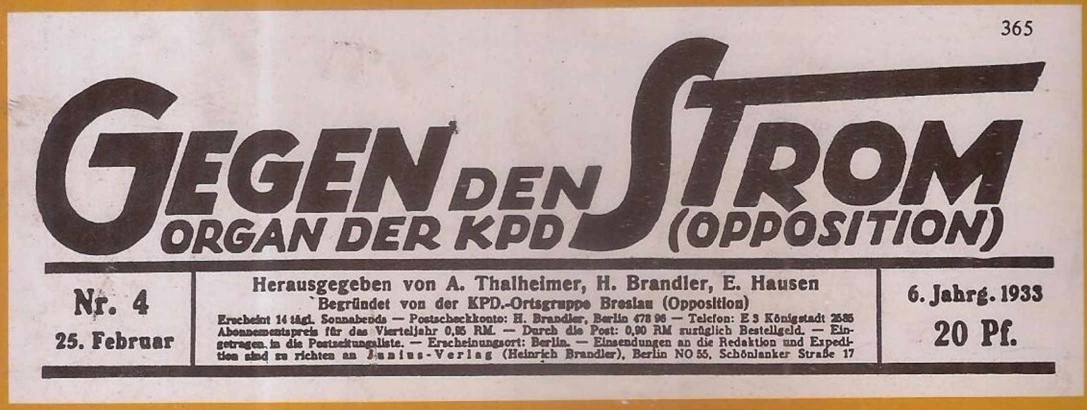

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